Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Leaves for Talks With King Husayn in Jordan

JN0607124896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1122 GMT 6 Jul 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza from the "Today's Events" program]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat left for the Jordanian capital, Amman, at noon today on a consultation visit. The president was accompanied by al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, secretary general of the presidency, and Culture Minister Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh.

President 'Arafat will meet with the Jordanian Monarch King Husayn in Jordan for consultations and follow-up work on Arab and Palestinian issues following the Arab summit results. The two sides will discuss the latest political developments in light of recent changes. President 'Arafat and King Husayn will also discuss Palestinian-Jordanian ties and ways to enhance and promote them. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Returns From Jordan Visit

JN0607172696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1700 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat returned home this evening after holding successful talks with King Husayn of Jordan in al-'Aqabah today.

Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, adviser to the president, said the Palestinian-Jordanian summit talks were successful and positive. He said the summit focused on the special bilateral ties and the latest political developments of concern to Palestine and Jordan. In statements to the Voice of Palestine, Abu-Rudaynah said the two sides agreed to continue the contacts to discuss political developments and the issues of mutual concern.

Palestinian Affairs: PA's al-Tarifi Views 'Arafat's Visit to Jordan

NC0707075696 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0510 GMT 7 Jul 96

[Telephone interview with Jamil al-Tarifi, minister of civilian affairs with the PA, in Ramallah, by Muhammad al-Aswad in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Al-Aswad] Mr. Jamil al-Tarifi, what is the importance of President Yasir 'Arafat's visit to Jordan in light of his meetings with the Jordanian king on the sidelines of the recent Arab summit in Cairo?

[Al-Tarifi] As you know, the PLO and the Palestinian Authority [PA] are always eager to close Arab ranks and achieve Arab reconciliation. We look forward to our Arab brothers support for the Palestinian position in the negotiations with the Israeli Government, and we look forward to Arab support for the PA. As you know, a three-way summit was recently held among His Excellency President Muhammad Husni Mubarak, His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat, and His Majesty King Husayn. This was followed by another trilateral summit in Damascus among President Mubarak, Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, and the representative of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia. The Damascus summit resulted in President Mubarak's call for the Arab summit in Egypt. The summit demonstrated an Arab solidarity needed by not only the Palestinians but all Arabs, especially now that the Likud and other more extreme rightist parties have come to power in Israel. Hence, the PA sees a need for constant Arab coordination, especially with big sister Egypt.

We are very grateful and appreciative to Egypt and its president for their support for our position. We are also interested in coordination with our brothers in Jordan, foremost of whom, of course, is his majesty the king, with a view to coordinating Arab positions in these delicate circumstances, especially in light of the many Israeli no's.

[Al-Asawd] How would you describe the current state of Jordanian-Palestinian coordination?

[Al-Tarifi] I believe that coordination is good, but we constantly need to show more mutual understanding and to keep our Jordanian brothers informed of our problems at the negotiations. As you know, Jordan, like Egypt, has diplomatic relations with Israel. Therefore, we are eager to keep Jordan informed of the latest developments in our negotiations with the Israeli Government and of the difficult conditions as a result of the obstacles which Israel places in the way of the PA, the siege against the Palestinian people, and the de facto freezing of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiating track. I believe that our coordination is good, but we look forward to integration with all our Arab brothers.

[Al-Aswad] Mr. al-Tarifi, in light of the Jordanian-Israeli agreement, what can Jordan do specifically to support the Palestinian cause and achieve a just peace on the Palestinian-Israeli track?

[Al-Tarifi] I believe that not only Amman can play a role. For example, the Arab summit clearly stressed that the Palestinian cause is the key to peace in the whole region. Therefore I believe that our brothers in Jordan need to send this message to the Israeli Government: There can be no peace in the region without a solution

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to the Palestinian problem. The so-called Middle East problem is essentially the Palestinian problem, so there is a need to get this message through.

At the same time—as President 'Arafat always says—we and Jordan are twins. Jordan is affected by any difficult situation we experience, and vice versa. Such a difficult situation may also impact negatively on the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty. So I believe that Jordan needs to support the Palestinian negotiator and send a message to the Israeli Government that without a solution to this problem there can be no stability in this region.

[Al-Aswad] The recent Arab summit was held specifically to support the peace process and send a message to the world about the firm Arab principles regarding this issue. Are the Palestinians satisfied with the implementation of the summit resolutions?

[Al-Tarifi] Yes. We are very satisfied with the summit. The Palestinian leadership and the Council of Ministers valued the Arab summit resolutions and the positions of the president, government, and people of Egypt. The Palestinian Legislative Council, in its session in Ramallah, also appreciated the Arab summit resolutions and Egypt's role.

[Al-Aswad] Thank you Jamil al-Tarifi, minister of civilian affairs with the PA.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat-Led Delegation Leaves for Cameroon, Morocco

JN0707101496 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0900 GMT 7 Jul 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat left the homeland for Cameroon a short while ago to lead the Palestinian delegation to the African summit, which will be held in Cameroon in the next two days. In a statement to Voice of Palestine, the president's adviser Nabil Abu-Rudaynah said President 'Arafat will deliver Palestine's speech at the conference and will meet with a number of friendly African leaders and officials. Palestine participates in the African summit as an observer. The president's adviser praised Palestinian-African relations, reaffirming that relations between Palestine and many African countries are continuous and distinguished.

Abu-Rudaynah noted that President 'Arafat and the accompanying delegation will stay two days in Cameroon to attend the summit conference. He added that the president will travel to Morocco from Cameroon for a one-day visit to meet with King Hassan II before returning home.

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Faluji Leaves for Iran To Promote Tehran-PA Ties

TA0707121596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1130 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Shaykh 'Imad al-Faluji, official in charge of communications in the Palestinian Authority [PA], left yesterday for Iran at the head of a Palestinian delegation to participate in a conference of Islamic ministers of communications being held in Tehran. Our correspondent Yasir 'Atilah reports that before leaving the Gaza Strip, Shaykh al-Faluji stated that during this visit he will seek to consolidate relations between the PA and the Arab and Islamic countries.

Our correspondent notes that since joining the PA, Shaykh al-Faluji has played a role in activating the dialogue between the PA and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], including an attempt to hold a meeting between a Hamas and a PA delegation in Amman six weeks ago.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Calls For New 'Intifadah' Against Israel

NC0707124096 Paris AFP in English 1153 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, July 7 (AFP) — The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) called Sunday [7 July] for Palestinians to renew the intifadah, or uprising, against Israel, which brought a wave of violence to the occupied territories from 1987 to 1993.

"Hamas is holding the hand of its brothers of the youth organization of Fatah and calls on them to close ranks, intensify resistance and renew from Hebron and Jerusalem the intifadah in order expel the occupiers from all of Palestine," the group said in a statement here. The youth wing of the Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat's Fatah faction threatened Wednesday to again take up arms if Israel's new rightwing government does not respect accords signed with the Palestinian Authority.

The Hamas statement praised the "return of Fatah to the resistance" and expressed its determination to "pursue the Jihad (holy war) despite the terrorism practiced by Zionists and the actions of the Palestinian Authority, which is stuck in an impasse and can only turn to the people."

Israel's new hardline Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has delayed the Israeli troop withdrawal from the West Bank town of Hebron, as agreed under the Palestinian autonomy accord with the former Labor-led government. He has caused anxiety among even moderate Palestinians for his refusal to negotiate the creation of a Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital

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and his desire to expand Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

The last intifidah, which caused more than 1,000 deaths on both sides, was halted in 1993 as Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization signed an accord establishing Palestinian self-rule on the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Calls on Palestinians To Revive Intifadah

NC0707132996 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1305 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hamas [The Islamic Resistance Movement] today called on the Palestinians to renew the Palestinian intifadah, which lasted in the occupied Palestinian territory from 1987 until 1993. In a statement disseminated in Damascus, Hamas stressed: We extend our hands to our brothers in Fatah to make Hebron and Jerusalem large gates for renewing the intifadah, escalating the resistance, and uniting the Palestinian, Arab, and Islamic ranks to expel the occupiers from all Palestine.

The Fatah Youth Movement [al-Shabibah] led by Yasir 'Arafat has threatened to renew the intifadah if the Israeli Government led by Netanyahu fails to honor the agreements signed with the Palestinian Authority.

Palestinian Affairs: U.S. Urged To Pressure Netanyahu To Resume Peace Talks

JN0707100296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0900 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hasan 'Asfur, coordinator of the negotiations affairs, called on the U.S. Administration to play its full role as a sponsor of the peace process and to guarantee the continuation of this process which is a common interest for all parties and people in the region. In a statement to Voice of Palestine today, Hasan 'Asfur said peace will not be achieved by showing bias toward one party and ignoring its evasion of implementing agreements. The coordinator of the negotiations affairs stressed that the U.S. Government should put pressure on the Tel Aviv government to resume the final-stage talks and to implement the agreements of the interim stage, because this will constitute a basic pillar to resume the talks and give momentum to the final-stage talks. Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu will begin an official visit to the United States tomorrow to hold talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton.

Palestinian Affairs: Sha'th on Withdrawal From Hebron, Lifting of Closure

JN0707065996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Nabil Sha'th, minister of planning and international cooperation, said there will be no more discussion on what was agreed to with regard to the withdrawal of the occupation forces from the city of Hebron. He said that any amendments imposed unilaterally by Israel will be considered a violation of the agreement.

Sha'th also described the Israeli Government's decision to withdraw the identity cards of the Palestinian citizens of Jerusalem as a racist attempt to expel them from the holy city in order to Judaize the city.

Regarding the declared Israeli policy on gradual lifting of the closure, Dr. Sha'th said: The Likud believes that the closure — from the ideological aspect — is a policy that will result in separating the two peoples and two states, and that the economic separation will result in political separation. Therefore, the Likud's lifting of the closure is based on continuation of the occupation, not on the principle of accepting the peace process.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Chairs PLO-Cabinet Meeting in Ramallah

JN0607071096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat chaired a 5-hour joint meeting of the PLO Executive Committee and the cabinet in Ramallah last night. Palestinian Legislative Council Speaker Ahmad Quray' attended.

The joint meeting discussed points on its agenda and decided to form a higher committee to support the al-Jahhalin Arab tribes against Israeli attempts to expel them from their land. The meeting also discussed Israeli occupation authorities' attempts to expel Palestinian citizens from occupied Jerusalem and harm the Palestinian health, cultural, and social centers and impede their service to the citizens, in addition to the continuous isolation of the holy city and preventing Muslims and Christians from performing their religious rites there. The participants stressed the importance of supporting our people's steadfastness in holy Jerusalem, the capital of our independent Palestinian state.

President 'Arafat informed the joint meeting of the agreement signed by the Palestinian National Authority [PNA] and the World Bank to improve water conditions in Gaza and treat sewage water as well as the

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agreements signed between the PNA and United Nations Relief and Works Agency [UNRWA] to transfer the UNRWA headquarters to Gaza.

During the meeting, the Palestinian delegation that will accompany President 'Arafat to the summit meeting with the Jordanian Monarch, King Husayn, was formed. It will be composed of Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, and As'ad 'Abd-al-Rahman. The delegation that will accompany President 'Arafat to the OAU summit will be composed of Abu-al-Lutf [Faruq Qaddumi], Jamal al-Surani, and 'Ali Ishaq.

Nabil Sha'th, minister of international cooperation, presented a report on his visit to London within strengthening the Palestinian-British relations.

Local Government Minister Sa'ib 'Urayqat briefed the meeting on the results reached by a committee formed under him to collect electricity bills in Gaza and the West Bank. The cabinet and the Executive Committee approved the committees recommendation that all arrears should be collected before the end of July.

Dr. 'Urayqat presented another report creating 200 local committees to activate the work of the municipal and village councils.

On the Bi'r Zayt University staff housing, which 'Arafat gave the name of Martyr Abu-Jihad, it was decided that competent authorities will contact the Islamic Bank to acquire the required loan as soon as possible.

Higher Education Minister Hanan 'Ashrawi presented a working plan to expose Israeli attempts to close down the Jerusalem and Hebron universities and prevent our students from Gaza Governorates from pursuing their studies in the West Bank.

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Egypt

Egypt: Mubarak Interviewed on Iran, Israel, U.S., Arab Summit

NC0707111596 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0905 GMT 7 Jul 96

[News conference by Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak with unidentified domestic correspondents after opening a natural gas field in Port Said on 7 July—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Correspondent] Sir, some Arab media expect developments in Egyptian-Iranian relations and say that a ministerial meeting may take place among Egypt, Syria, and Iran.

[Mubarak] There was a proposal to this effect, but we begged to be excused because Iran continues to be involved in actions against some countries, including Egypt; and we know it. They are promoting talk about meetings, but there are no meetings at ministerial level. Four years ago there was a meeting, but it was all talk. There is no ministerial or any other kind of meeting.

[Correspondent] Mr. President, what comes after the successful Arab summit?

[Mubarak] What do you want to know exactly?

[Correspondent] I am saying that the summit was successful and resulted in very good relations among the Arab leaders, who demonstrated a unified position that serves the Arab interest.

[Mubarak] I want to tell you something. After it signed the peace agreement with Israel, Egypt's relations with the Arab countries were suspended for 10 years. We endured that. In 1988, relations began to return to normal. We started to work to close Arab ranks. Closing Arab ranks is not something new, as some people may think. By the time of the Baghdad summit in May 1990, we were left with only one problem to solve — relations between Syria and Iraq, where personal problems were involved. We agreed in principle to hold the next summit in Cairo in November 1990, and agreed that we should hold annual summits, such as the African and other world summits. But in August, Kuwait was occupied. The Arab world suffered fragmentation and division as a result. Some forces were for [Iraq's invasion of Kuwait], others were against, and others complained of the presence of the foreign forces that came to liberate Kuwait. Those divisions, of course, ran contrary to Arab values. In 1992, we began working again to unify Arab ranks until the appropriate time for the summit came. We were supposed to meet before the Israeli elections, but certain circumstances postponed the meeting. Anyway, we met for the good of the Arabs; the summit's statement was excellent, calling on the various states — on Israel, on Turkey, and so on — to do so and so. I do not think there could have been anything less than that. Tremendous efforts were made to come up with that balanced statement, which threatens no one, contrary to what some people may think.

[Correspondent] Sir, some analysts believe Egypt came under some kind of pressure after this successful summit.

[Mubarak] I want to tell you something. Pressure anywhere in the world always produces contrary results. We do not tolerate any pressure. We can discuss matters and hold a dialogue, but we accept no pressure. No one can tolerate pressure, not even small states. We therefore should not call this pressure. This is misleading propaganda of sorts. Sometimes they talk about missiles, etc. We are accustomed to this. Whenever we are proceeding smoothly with something, they start some campaign. It is all right; never mind this. Sometimes those who launch the campaigns are either ignorant of facts or tendentious.

[Correspondent] Will there be any Arab meetings before Your Excellency's visit to the United States at the end of this month, God willing? And how do you evaluate Egyptian-U.S. relations?

[Mubarak] There is no problem with Egyptian-U.S. relations. After the election of Netanyahu, some individuals tried to create some confusion. But all this is nonsense. We are committed to peace and will continue to work for it, not on the basis of peace for peace, but on the basis of land for peace, as agreed upon in Madrid, in the agreements with the Palestinians, in the agreements with the Jordanians, and in the agreements with us. There is no room to change this.

But I think we should not rush things. Let us wait until we meet with the Israeli prime minister to learn how he thinks. If he is willing to work for peace, we are even more willing. If we do not achieve peace, we know what the sequence [preceding word in English] will be.

[Correspondent] Mr. President, has a date been fixed for Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu' visit to Cairo, and have you sensed a change in Netanyahu's political language four weeks after his assumption of power?

[Mubarak] I do not want to talk about or comment on his statements. Sometimes statements are intended for local consumption or made under certain circumstances. But what matters is our discussions. The same thing happened with Rabin: We talked; I understood what he had in mind; that reassured me; and the peace process went ahead. I wholeheartedly hope that the process will

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continue, because the alternative to peace is very serious for the whole region, for Egypt, Israel, all the Arabs, and even the friends of the United States. [passage omitted]

Egypt: Musa on Palestinian Issue, Israel, Missiles

NC0707190396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1800 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza, 7 Jul (MENA)—Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has emphasized that Israel's stands on Jerusalem, settlements, and withdrawal from the Golan are not final, as we understand it.

In an interview with the Palestinian newspaper AL-AYYAM, published today, Musa said that despite this, the Egyptian Government will not leave everything to chance alone and that it is cooperating with Arab governments to handle any development in this regard. Musa stressed that there is no solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict without establishing a Palestinian state and that there is absolutely nothing to prevent that. He also emphasized that Egyptian diplomacy supports the Palestinian people and their legitimate and just right.

Musa attributed Israel's failure to normalize its ties with the Palestinian people to the barrier created by the Israeli policy toward the Palestinians. He asked how an Egyptian businessman can engage in very important trade dealings and cooperate with Israeli businessmen normally when he sees Palestinian brothers blockaded and unacceptable measures under international laws and norms are imposed on their movements.

Commenting on Jerusalem's future, Musa told the Palestinian newspaper AL-AYYAM when he was in London recently that the Israelis' statement that Jerusalem is their eternal capital concerns the Israelis alone. These remarks, he added, will not deter our resolve as Arabs to regain East Jerusalem. He said the final status of Jerusalem depends on the outcome the negotiations will yield and that this outcome should be (acceptable) to the Palestinians, who are hoping that Jerusalem will be the capital of their state.

On the Zionist lobby's pressures in the United States, Musa said such pressures do not concern us and that they will not force Egypt to change its stand on this issue, in which it believes and defends. The Egyptian foreign minister denied an intention to hold a minisummit meeting in Damascus among the Egyptian, Syrian, and Jordanian leaders, saying such reports are baseless. He added that there is no need to convene a summit less than two weeks after an Arab summit that emerged with excellent stands.

Musa stressed Arab solidarity and that the Arabs have a unified position toward the peace process. He said the summit's statement that the peace process is a strategic issue must be reciprocated with a stance from Netanyahu's government stating that peace for Israel is also a strategic matter.

On Israel's uproar over Egypt's acquisition of long-range missiles, Musa said that Egypt does not pay attention to this talk. If Israel is concerned about its security and safety, Egypt has the same justifications. At the same time, Egypt is prepared to raise the issue of armament in the whole of the Middle East in a clear way. It is inexcusable for Israel to claim fear of Egypt's possession of long-range missiles at a time when Israel possesses nuclear weapons. Musa reiterated Egypt's demand that the Middle East be declared a zone clear of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles. He said the argument that Israel should remain strong is unjustified. If Israel wants to coexist with the states of the region, it must become part of the region. Before this can happen, it must accept the land-for-peace formula and return every inch of occupied Arab land to its owners.

Musa said it is unlikely that Israel will successfully normalize its relations with the Arab countries before it settles its dispute with the Palestinians and then with Syria and Lebanon. He said the Palestinian issue is the crux of the conflict in the region. The Israelis are wrong to believe that they can circumvent this issue.

On President Husni Mubarak's upcoming visit to the United States at the end of this month, Musa said the talks will focus on the peace process and ways of pushing it forward. He added that Israel will not be able to impose peace according to its own terms. This will not happen because a lasting peace is that which is accepted by the Arabs. He added that Israel's statement that it rejects prior conditions for negotiations is meaningless because the peace we desire is based on international laws and norms that call for exchanging land for peace.

Concluding, Musa warned Israel against wasting time. In this case Israel will be the loser because it will miss an opportunity which might not come up again in the future.

Egypt: Government Said Ready To Forego U.S. Aid if Pressured

NC0707070096 Paris AFP in English 2326 GMT 6 Jul 96

[Report by Mona Salem]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, July 7 (AFP) — Egypt could do without its massive 2.1 billion dollar annual aid from the U.S. if Washington tries to use the money

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to "blackmail" Cairo into softening criticism of Israel's hardline Premier Binyamin Netanyahu, experts said.

Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has said Cairo will not "stand silent with arms tied" if the U.S. or Israel seeks to reduce Egypt's role in the region, while admitting to "differences" with Washington over the peace process.

The government press has reacted with outrage to a report last week in the Israeli daily HA'ARETZ that the Jewish state has lobbied Washington to use the aid to push Cairo into moderating its policies towards Israel's new government. Egypt, which receives 2.1 billion dollars in civilian and military aid annually, is along with Israel the largest recipient of aid from the United States. President Husni Mubarak is due to head to Washington in late July, on the heels of Netanyahu's first U.S. visit beginning Monday [8 July].

Cairo has grumbled that Washington has been too silent in the face of Netanyahu's "policy of no's" in the peace process, and was stung recently by reports in the U.S. that Egypt had bought Scud missiles from North Korea, purchases which could shut off U.S. aid. "Egypt will not accept that this aid be used as a weapon by Israel, who could wield it whenever there are differences between them in the peace process," Makram Muhammad Ahmad, editor-in-chief of the government weekly AL-MUSAWWAR, told AFP. Ahmad, a close associate of Mubarak, said U.S. civilian aid to Egypt totalling 800 million dollars "has lost most of its importance since two years ago when Washington stopped subsidizing Egyptian purchases of American grain."

"Cairo has in any case expected a gradual reduction in this aid," he added. "Civilian aid is of limited benefit to us because 15 percent of it is used in feasibility studies made by American experts, while the rest finances American exports" to Egypt, he said.

'Abd-al-Fattah al-Jabali, an economic expert at the al-Ahram Center for Strategic Studies said that from 1975-1994, "Egypt received 19 billion dollars in U.S. aid, of which the United States took most of the profit."

"U.S. exports to Egypt were valued at 2.8 billion dollars in 1995 compared to 593 million dollars in Egyptian exports to the U.S.," al-Jabali said. The 1.3 billion dollars in military aid to Egypt "is part of the American strategy to eliminate Soviet arms from the Middle East, to become the sole provider in this vital region with its petroleum resources," Ahmad said. "But what the U.S. gives with its right hand, it takes back with its left because we are obliged to buy only American weapons," said Ahmad 'Abd-al-Halim from the National Center for Middle East Studies.

Cairo insists relations with Washington should be based on the two sides' common interests, especially progress in the peace process. "If the peace process crumbles, extremism will grow and all the moderate governments in the area will be threatened. Is it America's interests to see anarchy reigning in the area," Ahmad said. "There is little hope Netanyahu will change his positions on the peace process. So the situation risks worsening since it is not certain Washington will take a strong stance" to moderate the Israeli premier, he said.

"If the peace process falls, then we cannot exclude armed confrontations, or even a clash between Syria and Israel," he said. But the head of the Arab League's Center for Arab Studies, Ahmad Yusuf, played down the danger, saying, "U.S.-Egyptian relations are going through a crisis, but Cairo and Washington are used to dealing with these problems."

Egypt: Interior Minister Discusses Terrorism, Warns Brotherhood

NC0507210896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2034 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 5 Jul (MENA)—Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi has stated that Egypt and Europe will cooperate to combat international terrorism and take measures to prevent political asylum from being granted or residence permits issued to terrorists. He said that this cooperation also aims at preventing financial remittances to terrorist aides. He noted that intensive contacts are under way and will achieve positive results soon in confronting terrorist networks abroad. He noted that cooperation with the Arab countries will be enhanced and information will be exchanged with the various security agencies.

In a statement to the newspaper AL-AHRAM on 6 July al-Alfi stated that the State security and intelligence services have succeeded in monitoring terrorist assignments and locating sources of funds abroad. He also said that a serious terrorist organization has been uncovered and that more details will be announced as soon as the evidence is complete, possibly in the next few days.

Al-Alfi has again called for an international conference under the UN umbrella, and as soon as possible, to combat terrorism and chart a complete international strategy on ways to confront terror. He warned the Muslim Brotherhood against any violation of legitimacy during the forthcoming elections for the local councils. He said he will allow no member of the banned Brotherhood to run, but said that any individual has

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a right to run and that voters are responsible for choosing their candidates in the elections. He said: The Brotherhood circulates rumors and assails me because I am the only minister to expose their secret organization and bring their leaders to trial after defining their roles and relationship with the international Brotherhood organization, which stands behind most acts of world terror.

Egypt: Al-Baz Cites Conditions for Improving Relations With Iran

NC0707070196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2117 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 6 Jul (MENA)—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, stressed that there is no Syrian mediation between Egypt and Iran in the usual sense of the word, but that the Syrians used the term merely to express the disposition among Iranian leaders to improve relations with Egypt, and this was conveyed by Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' during his last visit to Egypt.

Speaking to correspondents today, al-Baz said: Our stand is that we are not against improving relations with any country provided there are firm bases and tangible proof about that country's policies. He added: If Tehran wants to improve relations with us, it must give us tangible proof that it does not interfere in our domestic affairs or help and support the terrorists and that it will not try to exert pressure on the Arab countries in the Gulf region, because these are the causes of the dispute with Iran.

Dr. al-Baz went on to say: We have no other reasons for the dispute with Iran, which must change its policy and orientation if it wants our relations to improve. We judge any country's policy based on its actions, not on its statements.

Asked if Syria is mediating in order to justify its relations with Iran, al-Baz said: I do not think so. Syria does not have to justify its relations with Iran. We in Egypt have full confidence in the intentions of our brothers in Syria and in Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad's intentions and orientation. He added: We believe that President al-Asad is doing what he believes to be in the interest of the Arab nation.

He noted that Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' recently visited Tehran to find a solution to the Iranian-Bahraini dispute, not because of the relations between Egypt and Iran, adding that this was the result of Syria's desire to resolve the dispute between Iran and Bahrain.

Asked if Syria is on the verge of an alliance with Iran to counter the Turkish-Israeli military alliance, al-Baz said: We did not get the impression that Syria wants to establish an alliance with Tehran to confront or balance the reported Turkish-Israeli alliance. He added: We do not believe that Turkey is on its way to an alliance with Israel. We believe that Turkey will think deeply before getting involved in such a thing. He said: Israel and Turkey are cooperating in specific fields. We hope that this is all, and that the two countries will take their interests with the Arab world into consideration. He stressed that Syria is a full member of and a natural ally within the Arab family and not an ally of any non-Arab party.

Asked whether Iran continues to pose a threat to the Arab countries, Dr. al-Baz said: Iran cannot attack the Arab world and does not pose any military threat to it. The only threat is that it will seek to destabilize some Arab countries, and will interfere and put pressure on some countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and other Gulf states.

He added: This policy of seeking to weaken the Arab countries is dangerous, but we do not fear any Iranian aggression against the Arab nation.

Regarding the Israeli prime minister's visit to Egypt, Dr. al-Baz said that the visit will follow his visits to the United States and France, adding that the Israeli prime minister will return home from these visits for some time before coming to Cairo.

Regarding reports of a meeting between Yasir 'Arafat and Netanyahu in Cairo, the Egyptian official said: There is no information that such a meeting will be held.

Egypt: Al-Baz Warns of Arab 'No's' if Netanyahu Insists on Policy

NC0707095396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0835 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 7 Jul (MENA)—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, has said that if Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu fails to respond to the requirements of the peace process, he will suffer from international isolation, and if he insists on his three no's, Arab no's should be expected in return—namely, no to normalization, no to negotiations, and no to regional cooperation.

He said Netanyahu's policy will become clear only after his visits to Washington, Paris, and Cairo. Then, we will be able to find out what he has to offer, al-Baz said.

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In a statement to the weekly ROSE AL-YUSUF to be published tomorrow, Monday [8 July], Dr. al-Baz stresses that the Middle East peace process is based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425 and the principle of land for peace. He points out that both Israel and the United States have acknowledged this principle.

Dr. al-Baz noted several positive factors that he said must not be relinquished. These include the fact that 50 percent of Israelis are for peace and that the world, through the G-7 summit in Lyons, has stressed the principle of land for peace.

On another topic, Dr. al-Baz explained that Egypt is against the separation of southern Sudan from the north and against sanctions on the Sudanese people because sanctions would increase the suffering of the Sudanese. Noting that sanctions are now being imposed on several Arab countries — Libya, Iraq, and Sudan — he said this is very harmful to the Arabs.

Al-Baz said there are about 15,000 extremists in Sudan. He revealed that high-level security meetings between Egypt and Sudan began after the recent meeting between President Mubarak and Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir on the sidelines of the Arab summit in Cairo.

On Iran's attempts to improve its relations with Egypt and the Arab countries, al-Baz said Iran has expressed readiness to improve relations with Egypt. But judging from experience, he said, each time there is talk of improvement, a retreat takes place on the pretext that there is a struggle between the moderates and the hardliners [in Iran], and things remain unchanged.

He called on Iran to take serious, practical, and tangible steps to improve relations, not just express intentions.

Egypt: 'Source' Denies Plan for Egyptian-Syrian-Iranian Meeting

NC0607183296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1812 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 6 Jul (MENA)—An official Egyptian source has denied some Arab and Iranian media reports attributed to official sources that Egypt has agreed in principle to hold a three-way meeting in Damascus among Egypt, Syria, and Iran at the foreign ministerial level.

The source said in a statement today that these speculations are unfounded.

Egypt: Paper Urges U.S. To Resume Role of 'Impartial' Broker

NC0807072996 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0505 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 8 Jul (MENA)—In an editorial today the newspaper AL-AKHBAR warns that the political and economic gains made by the United States in the Middle East in the past 10 years will come under a major threat unless Washington resumes its role as an impartial and honest broker in the Middle East peace process. The paper says that peace and stability in the Middle East greatly influence global political and economic stability.

AL-AKHBAR adds: The United States must consider that its backing for the intransigent positions of Binyamin Netanyahu's government means it will be opposing the entire world, the various blocs of which are calling for putting peace back on the right track.

The paper asks: Will the United States oppose the world for Netanyahu's sake?

The paper points out that U.S. President Bill Clinton must understand that the security Netanyahu is never weary of talking about must be security for all the parties, not only for the Israelis, and that security cannot be attained through force, but by persuasion, mutual agreement, and peace.

Egypt; Netanyahu Urged To 'Rethink' Policy Prior to U.S. Visit

NC0607132996 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1140 GMT 6 Jul 96

[Commentary by Ahmad al-Qasir: "Will the Israeli Prime Minister Be Realistic and Rethink His Policy"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Those who think they can impede the Arab-Israeli peace process, which was launched in Madrid in late 1991 on the basis of UN Resolutions 242, 338, and 425 and the principle of land for peace, are mistaken. And equally mistaken are those who imagine they can derail the peace process under the pretext of maintaining security, or under any other unacceptable excuse. This is especially true now that the peace process has scored some successes, particularly on the Palestinian-Israeli track, which is the mainstay of any just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East.

When we emphasize these facts, we do not proceed from a vacuum. We base our judgment on several important facts:

1. A just peace is now a pressing demand by all the peoples of the Arab region, including the Israeli people.

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A large segment of the Israelis are calling for peace with the Arabs, despite the hardline slogans which Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu raised during his election campaign and repeated after his election, notably his notorious no's regarding Arab Jerusalem, withdrawal from the Golan, and the establishment of the Palestinian state, and his obstruction of the plan to withdraw the Israeli forces from Hebron as stipulated by agreements signed between Israel and the Palestinian Authority [PA] in Oslo, Washington, and Cairo and witnessed by the whole world.

2. Any retreat by Netanyahu from the peace process and from the implementation of the international agreements entails many risks to all peoples of the region, foremost among which is the Israeli people, as clearly pointed out by President Husni Mubarak in his statement to the French newspaper LE FIGARO on Thursday [4 July]. The president warned of a serious escalation of terrorism if Israel backtracks from or hinders the peace process. This would threaten world peace.

3. The agreements reached and signed between the former Israeli government and the PA are international conventions witnessed by the cosponsors of the peace process — The United States and Russia — and the European countries. They, therefore, are binding on every Israeli government, be it Labor or Likud. Consequently, Netanyahu has no right to disown these agreements or reject negotiations with the PA and Yasir 'Arafat, the legitimate elected representative of the Palestinian people. Moreover, the continued Israeli siege on the West Bank and Gaza for many months has serious negative results.

4. The attempt to play the card of Arab divisions is now worthless. In the expanded Arab summit in Cairo, the Arabs unified their position and cast off their differences and marginal battles to dedicate themselves to building a new Arab future capable of dealing with regional and international changes realistically and rationally, away from the old emotional and worthless slogans that Israel always used to distort the Arabs' image before the world. This new Arab reality necessarily enjoyed direct international support from the latest European Union summit in Florence, from Russia, and from the G-7 summit in Lyons. All those countries stressed the need to resume the peace process based on the terms of reference set in Madrid and on the Palestinian people's right to establish their independent state on their national soil. They also emphasized that the issue of Arab Jerusalem can only be decided through negotiations between the two sides.

5. Netanyahu must know full well that Israel's security, which he places above peace, can never be achieved unless a just peace guaranteeing the legitimate rights of all peoples of the region is established. Moreover, security must be guaranteed to all parties without exception. Any attempt to flex muscles or threaten to use force to impose the status quo is doomed to failure, and the attempt to play the time factor or the card of the U.S. elections will be to no avail. With the Cairo summit, the Arabs announced that the just peace is their strategic option and that they will not go back on this option under any circumstances. Thus, they threw the ball in the court of Israel and its supporters.

Will the head of the Israeli Government reconsider his calculations before he leaves for Washington to meet with President Clinton? Will he realize that the Arabs have indeed embarked on a new historic phase, that they are calling for a just peace for the sake of all the peoples of the region, and that any attempt to pressure the Arabs will be doomed? The answer will be clear in the next few weeks.

Egypt: Turkey's 'Intransigent Attitude' to Water Assailed

NC0807074796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0507 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 8 Jul (MENA)—The newspaper AL-AHRAM says Turkey's claim that it has the right to carry out its plan to build 17 dams on the Tigris and Euphrates contravenes every international convention and international law.

In an editorial today the paper condemns Turkey's allegations that the waters of the Tigris and the Euphrates belong exclusively to it or that the two rivers are not international, but simply cross the border into other countries. It states that these allegations are untrue and contradict history and the facts.

The paper hails the visit carried out by a delegation from the Syrian Irrigation Ministry to Iraq to discuss with Iraqi irrigation officials ways of sharing Euphrates water. It stresses that this visit boosts the Arab stand versus Turkey's intransigent attitude.

AL-AHRAM notes that Iraq and Syria have an earlier agreement to share Euphrates water—52 percent for Iraq and 58 percent for Syria [percentages as received] and that this agreement refutes Turkey's contention that Syria and Iraq have never agreed on how to share the Euphrates water.

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Libya

Libya: French Judge Arrives for Talks on UTA Plane Inquiry

LD0507193496 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1910 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Tripoli, 5 Jul — Jean-Louis Bruguiere, the French judge, arrived this afternoon at Ra's Judayr, in the Great Jamahiryah, travelling by land. The visit is within the context of French-Libyan cooperation in the judicial field. The French judge will meet with his Libyan Arab colleagues within the framework of the inquiry into the affair of the French UTA plane. [passage omitted]

Libya: State of Emergency in Banghazi; Security Forces Storm Jail

MM0807104896 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 8 Jul 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Libyan Opposition: Banghazi Under 'Maximum State of Emergency'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-HAYAH — An authoritative source in the National Front for the Salvation of Libya said yesterday that Banghazi, in east Libya, is currentiy under a "maximum state of emergency." The source told AL-HAYAH that Libyan security services have for three days been staging extensive sweep and search raids in the city, the second largest in Libya. The source added that the sweep operations are being conducted in a very extensive manner and that the security forces are combing every part of the city and searching every building there.

The source said that a riot occurred last week in al-Kuwayfiyah prison, 15 km east of Banghazi. The source added that the prison had been filled with prisoners over a number of years, that some of the prisoners were being held without trial, and that prisoners were badly treated. The source pointed out that some prisoners staged a hunger strike in protest at conditions in the prison and that the situation developed a few days ago into quarrels and clashes between the guards and the prisoners, who took control of the prison. The source added that Libyan security forces encircled the prison and then stormed it in a battle that resulted in a "large number" of victims among both the assailants and the prisoners.

Libya: Paper—Al-Qadhdhafi Facing Challenges From Fundamentalists

LD0707110796 London THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH in English 7 Jul 96 p 27

[Article by Con Coughlin: "Al-Qadhdhafi Gets a Dose of His Own Medicine"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi may pride himself of being one of the West's most reviled pariahs, but the Libyan leader is facing the most difficult challenge of his 27-year reign from Islamic fundamentalists who want to make his terrorist regime even more radical.

As Colonel al-Qadhdhafi struggles to contain the damage inflicted by the United Nations' economic sanctions, a sustained guerrilla campaign by militant Islamic dissidents has caused a crisis within his regime.

In the most recent revolt against the regime, a group of prisoners at the notorious Bu Salim prison, just south of Tripoli, staged a riot at the end of last month. The prison is one of Libya's top security prisons, where most political prisoners and detainees are held. Many have been held there since the early 1980s.

According to information passed to THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH, a group of prisoners overpowered the prison guards and seized their weapons. For the next three days there was a standoff which ended when Colonel al-Qadhdhafi ordered his troops to suppress the revolt.

Soldiers using automatic weapons and grenades stormed the prison. In the ensuing shoot-out, scores of prisoners and troops were killed and hundreds more wounded. Nearby al-Hadhba hospital was closed to the public in order to receive casualties from Bu Salim.

Despite the efforts of Colonel al-Qadhdhafi's henchmen to control such disturbances, they have escalated.

So far this year, they have included attacks on military installations, the seizure of weapons and ammunition from military bases, hit-and run attacks on security checkpoints, the assassination of security officers, and armed clashes with Libya's military forces.

In one of the more notable clashes, the dictator was forced to dispatch helicopter gunships and troops to Banghazi, Libya's second city, after a group of Islamic fighters who had escaped from jail joined fellow militants in an anti-al-Qadhdhafi rebellion.

The revolt against his dictatorship began in May last year in the oil-rich eastern provinces, with Ajdabiya and Banghazi the main centres of insurrection. It soon spread to other areas, including Darnah and al-Bayda,

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in the Green Mountain region. Several incidents have also taken place in Tripoli, al-Zawiyah and Misratah in western Libya.

Colonel al-Qadhdhafi prides himself on being a devout Muslim and his regime is run on Koranic principles.

But he has his own interpretation of Islam, which differs markedly from the conventions. He is a staunch supporter of women's rights and has an all-female group of bodyguards who accompany him on foreign trips. More orthodox Muslims, who believe that women should neither be heard nor seen in public, find this type of Koranic interpretation totally unacceptable.

The Islamic groups opposed to Colonel al-Qadhdhafi are campaigning for a more traditional Islamic regime, so that, after years of terrorising innocent civilians, the Libyan leader is now receiving a dose of his own medicine.

One of the groups opposing him is the Islamic Martyrs Movement, which claimed responsibility for an armed attack on the Egyptian Consulate in Banghazi earlier this year in which two Libyan policemen were killed. The leader of this group is called Muhammad al-Hammi.

Colonel al-Qadhdhafi's Islamic opponents are clearly well organised and believed to have received support from their Algerian counterparts' who have effectively brought the Algerian government to its knees through brutal and sustained terror.

Some al-Qadhdhafi opponents are thought to be veterans of the Afghan War, where they received ideological indoctrination and valuable military training.

Sudan

Sudan: Egyptian Delegation Reportedly Holds Talks in Khartoum

NC0507113596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1045 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum, 5 Jul (MENA)—The nongovernmental Sudanese newspaper AL-RA'Y AL-AKHAR has revealed that a ranking Egyptian security delegation has concluded numerous rounds of talks in Khartoum with specialized bodies. The talks dealt with the development of relations between Egypt and Sudan within the framework of implementing the directives the two presidents—Sudanese President 'Umar al-Bashir and Egyptian President Husni Mubarak—issued during their recent meeting in Cairo on the sidelines of the Arab summit.

The newspaper, which published the report in its main headlines, added that the delegation left Khartoum yesterday evening after concluding the talks, which went on for two days. During these talks they discussed a number of issues pertaining to joint security, securing the borders, and combating smuggling, in addition to the obstacles to clearing the atmosphere in our bilateral ties. During their meeting in Cairo Presidents Mubarak and al-Bashir discussed the settling of the differences between the two countries. After that, various committees began to work to restore good relations between the two fraternal countries.

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Bahrain

Bahrain: Ruling Family Said To Continue 'Onslaught' Against People

JN0807130996 (Internet) Voice of Bahrain WWW in English 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The ruling family continued its onslaught against the residential areas of Bahrain killing and injuring more people. Following the sentencing to death of three people on 1 July, peaceful demonstrations took to the streets in many areas. On 2 July, the foreign-staffed security forces besieged Sitrah (from which the latest victims came from) and fired live ammunition killing 17-years old 'Ali Tahir and injuring four others. The dead body was taken away by the foreign forces to an unknown location. Later on, these forces stormed the house of the martyr's parent for the routine ransacking and confiscation of passports. The ruling family adopted a policy of burying the victims without the knowledge or presence of their relatives. This is forbidden in Islam, but the ruling family feels comfortable enough to commit all types of violations without fear of condemnation.

On the other hand, the unconstitutional State Security Court passed more arbitrary sentences on 4 July, against three innocent people. Mahmud 'Abbas Habib Ahmad was jailed for five years and fined $1,325. Muhammad 'Ali Ma'tuq received a three-year jail term and was fined 300 dinars ($810). A dentist, Dr. Sultan 'Ali 'Abdallah Sultan, was jailed for six months on charges of distributing "false news." On 2 July, an Omani businessman, Mr. 'Abd-al-Jalil al-'Asfur was sentenced to 3 months jail, fined 700 dinars ($1,890) and expulsion after end of prison term on charges of "communicating."

The encounter between the ruling family and the people of Bahrain is now bound to take a different and more difficult course. While suppression of this kind satisfies the psychology of those sick persons in-charge of oppression, it can only add to the fuel for a longer and more dragged crisis that will not be settled by shear force. The people of Bahrain are living their days counting their victims at the hands of a vicious dictatorship and at the same time planning for the next stage of struggle for attaining human and constitutional rights.

Bahrain: Death Sentences Said Passed Against 3 'Innocent' People

JN0807123096 (Internet) Voice of Bahrain WWW in English 1 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The State Security Court passed death sentences against three innocent people, sentenced four others to life imprisonment and one person received 15 years jail sentence. The eight defendants pleaded not guilty and lawyers involved in the case gathered evidences from dozens of witnesses proving that the eight could not have committed the crime of burning a restaurant in Sitrah four months ago in which 7 Bangladeshi workers died. One of the Bahraini judges, Sa'd al-Shamlan refused to pass the harsh sentences after reviewing the case, and hence an Egyptian judge was put in his place to confirm these sentences which are viewed by the opposition as political murders.

The three victims who received the death sentences on 1 July are: 'Ali Ahmad 'Abdallah al-'Asfur, Yusuf Hasan 'Abd-al-Baqi, and Ahmad Khalil Ibrahim Hubayl al-Katan. The four victims sentenced for life are Khalil Ibrahim Abdallah Khamis, Qambar Khamis 'Ali Qambar, Abdallah Ibrahim 'Abdallah Khamis, and Muhammad Rida Ya'qub Yusuf al-'Attar. The eighth victim sentenced for 15 years prison is 'Abd-al-'Aziz Husayn 'Abd-al-Baqi.

It is worth nothing that the Bangladeshi Embassy protested against the burial of their citizens without their knowledge. The security forces concealed the truth by not allowing even a Bangladeshi official to inspect the bodies.

The powers of the State Security Court were extended on 19 and 20 March 1996 when the Amir issued two decrees transferring more than 85 offenses that used to be dealt with by civil courts to the security one. Sentences passed by the unconstitutional State Security Court can not be appealed. Moreover, the said court base its sentences on confessions extracted from defendants during custody without the presence of lawyers, thus paving the way for the use of torture to compile confessions. Since last March some 110 people have been sentenced after unfair trials with most of the victims receiving sentences ranging from 10 years to life, and in this latest case three innocent citizens have been sentenced to death as part of the policy of victimising the Shia community for the satisfaction of some political circles.

Uprising areas continue to witness disturbances and in the past three nights gas cylinder explosions were heard in residential areas located north-west of Bahrain. The ruling family has gambled with the lives of the community in the belief that this might consolidate its governance. In fact, the gap is widening and the rulers will find it hard to break the will of the people of Bahrain.

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Bahrain: Death Sentences Reportedly Create 'Volatile Situation'

JN0807114396 (Internet) Voice of Bahrain WWW in English 7 Jul 96

[Voice of Bahrain is a London-based Bahraini opposition source]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mass processions took to the streets (6 July) in Manama and other parts of the country on the occasion of the 40th martyrdom day of Imam al-Husayn, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad. The intensity of attendance and the raising of slogans, such as "Parliament is the solution" and "Release Shaykh al-Jamri," confirmed the presence and steadfastness of the people of Bahrain. It is also one year since the young 16-years Sa'id al-Iskafi was tortured to death by Khalid al-Wazan and the people called for the implementation of justice against such killers. The road between Qaful and al-Budayyi' Highway was besieged last night.

The unconstitutional State Security Court set-up by the ruling family to pass arbitrary sentences following summary trials that depend on confessions extracted in custody without the presence of lawyers continued its violations of human rights. On 6 July, it jailed three citizens for six years each. They were: 'Abbas Ahmad Yusuf Fahd, 'Ali Ibrahim al-Shufah and Salman Mirza Salman Muhammad.

The ruling family has intensified its campaign against the women of Bahrain. In the last few days around a dozen have been arrested, the latest being: Aminah Hasan 'Ali, Zahrah 'Ali 'Isa (both are nurses from al-Dayr), Fatimah al-Kanguni and a daughter of Hajji Ahmad al-Halwachi (both are from Manama). Women are subjected to degrading treatment that is shocking the Bahraini society.

In the last three weeks, two people were killed, one 12-years old Mahmud 'Abd-al-Latif Husayn who died in custody on 11 June and the other, 'Ali Tahir, who was shot dead on 2 July. Both were buried by the foreign-staffed security forces without the presence of their families. A person close to the government stated that "as long as the government is assured that the U.S. State Department is supporting these atrocities, the ruling family will go on killing and burying more people".

The death sentences passed against three innocent people on 1 July are creating a volatile situation. Bahrain is now being geared up for more troubles as the ruling family gets on with its misguided and disastrous approach of attempting to suppress the people of Bahrain. The Economist Intelligence Unit stated in its latest quarterly report on Bahrain that "The security situation is likely to worsen over the next six months. The likelihood of serious clashes with the security forces has increased.... It is possible that the security forces, which are largely staffed by Pakistanis and are overstretched, will fail to contain clashes.... [ellipses as received] Despite the clashes, protesters have not called for the overthrow of the Khalifahs but continue to demand political rights enshrined in a constitution the royal family suspended over 20 years ago. This could easily change if Shaykh 'Isa continues to use repression as the sole method of political control or to order more executions." The Economist also referred to the possibility that the opposition might "start demanding the transfer of the country's leadership to younger members of the ruling family. Such a demand would probably be acceptable to the Sunni business community which has become restless and may throw its collective weight behind the pro-constitution movement."

Kuwait

Kuwait: International Support Said Growing for Convert Sentenced to Death

MS0807095896 London THE TIMES in English 8 Jul 96 p 10

[Report by Eve-Ann Prentice: "Support Grows For Kuwaiti Christian Sentenced To Die"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A businessman, effectively sentenced to death by an Islamic court in Kuwait for converting from Islam to Christianity, said yesterday that the disclosure of his plight by THE TIMES had given him hope of survival.

Robert Hussein, 45, speaking from hiding in Kuwait, said: "It has been a miracle that I have survived for so long. Now many people have come forward to offer to help me because of your exposure of the terror I have lived with. I feel wonderful today."

The newspaper reported on Saturday [6 July] that Mr Hussein had been forced into hiding after the Islamic court ruled that he was guilty of apostasy which Islamic lawyers said was punishable by death.

Mr Hussein said earlier that he had rejected offers of large sums of money from Muslims to try to persuade him to return to Islam. He spoke as calls for action to help him spread at the weekend in Britain and America.

The growing clamour surrounding Mr Hussein also prompted criticism of the West by a Kuwaiti politician, who said the Islamic court's ruling was sound, and suggested that Mr Hussein would have to get used to it.

Britain has expressed concern over the case to Kuwait, through the British Embassy there.

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Mr Hussein, once an affluent businessman but now an outcast because of his new faith, has not seen or talked to his children for seven months. His only contact with his wife has been by telephone, he said from the house where he is hiding. Once the general manager of a family building and trading business that had $5 million (3.2 million pounds) in assets, Mr Hussein now fears reprisals and has had to move from house to house, mostly staying with Western expatriates.

In a bitter retort to the West meanwhile, Khaled al-Adwa [as published], a leading Islamic politician in Kuwait, said that the country's Islamicists did not want an international uproar over Mr Hussein. Mr Adwa, a fiery member of the powerful Islamic caucus in Kuwait's 50-seat elected assembly, said Western countries could not lecture Kuwait on human rights because they did not observe such rights, the English-language Kuwait News reported.

"Religious courts have the jurisdiction in matters of personal status for Muslims, so the court has already decided to declare [Mr Hussein] an apostate and there is no other alternative for this conversion which is forbidden in Islam," Mr Adwa said.

Christian pressure groups in the United States and Britain protested strongly to Kuwait's embassies in Washington and London about the ruling.

Donald Anderson, Labour MP for Swansea East, said the Kuwaitis should reverse the ruling, and urged the British Government to intervene on Mr Hussein's behalf. "If they [the Kuwaitis] have any regard for world public opinion and their image outside, they must do something about this," he told the BBC. "Clearly it is quite unacceptable that people who change their faith are persecuted in this way and they must be embarrassed into conforming with international laws.

"The Kuwaiti Government owe us and the Western allies for their very existence as a Government now, following our intervention on their behalf with our men, with our material, during the Gulf War," he said.

Oman

Oman: 'Internal Memorandum' Declares Intent To Withdraw From Arab Boycott

TA0507121196 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 5 Jul 96 p A7

[Report by Sagi Hametz]

[FBIS Translated Text] An internal memorandum formulated by the Omani Government declares Oman's intention to withdraw from the Arab boycott. The memorandum was brought to the attention of the Israeli economic representation in Oman. This document was presented to Israeli Foreign Ministry leaders at the beginning of the week. It was not officially presented to the Foreign Ministry, and was defined rather as an initial document.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: King Fahd's Meeting With Chirac Detailed

LD0707222196 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 2125 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Jeddah, 7 Jul (SPA) — King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, the custodian of the two holy mosques, and His Excellency French President Jacques Chirac held a meeting at the Royal Court in Salam Palace yesterday evening.

The meeting reviewed the historical relations between France and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and their role in developing political, economic, commercial, and scientific cooperation in the service of the mutual interests of the two countries.

The meeting also covered ways and means to develop this cooperation in the interest of international security and peace, in addition to the progress made so far in the process aimed at achieving a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in the region, and also the future prospects for the continuation of this process. [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia: Chirac Says Visit Aimed at Establishing Partnership

LD0707232396 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 2230 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] French President Jacques Chirac has said that his visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has a political character aimed at establishing further close ties between his country and the kingdom. President Chirac highlighted his meeting with King Fahd Bin Abd al-Aziz Al Sa'ud, the custodian of the two holy mosques, and expressed his thanks to the dearly beloved king for the warm welcome and the kind hospitality.

At a news conference held in Jeddah today, the French president said that his meetings with King Fahd, the crown prince, the second deputy prime minister and defense minister, and the interior minister [seven second break in reception] a new partnership in order to strengthen the ties of respect, friendship, and mutual trust. He said: The feelings I have for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia require a strong presence in the economic area. In this respect, the kingdom is the first source of oil

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for France and the kingdom is the first country France exports to in the region. However, he stressed the need to strengthen those ties.

President Jacques Chirac added that he was extremely happy to lay down the foundations of this partnership which, he said, he wished for both countries. He also said that he reviewed matters relating to the peace process. In this respect, he hailed the interest King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz had shown in the peace process in the region. He said that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was making great efforts in helping the Palestinian Authority and Lebanon. He added that his country was one of the first to make its contribution to the Palestinian Authority.

Saudi Arabia: Chirac Planning Deeper Ministerial Contacts

LD0707141296 Riyadh SPA in English 1250 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jeddah, July 7, SPA — French President Jacques Chirac said France is planning to conduct with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia more organized and more deep ministerial contacts and in particular at the level of foreign ministers.

Speaking before the members of the French community here yesterday, Chirac underscored the importance of activating relations of partnership and friendship with the kingdom.

Chirac pointed out that King Faysal Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz and Charles de Gaulle had laid the foundation of Saudi-French friendship at their meeting in 1967 taking into account the importance of cooperation between the Arab Gulf and France as well as between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and France.

These friendship relations between the two countries require a momentum so as to promote them to the level that wished by the two leaders about 30 years ago, he said.

Chirac saluted the victims of the criminal blast incident that recently took place in al-Khubar and said all legal means will be taken through close cooperation with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to confront terrorism.

Saudi Arabia: Chirac—Saudis Cannot Be Bypassed in Islamic World

LD0707121796 Paris France-2 Television Network in French 1100 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] This morning, the Saudis did not hide their sensitivity to the first statements of French President Jacques Chirac.

[Begin Chirac recording] Saudi Arabia is a country which cannot be bypassed when dealing with political relations in the Gulf naturally and the Middle East but also beyond that in the relations which our country can have with all the Islamic countries. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia: Chirac Urges Clear Israeli Statement on Peace Process

LD0707165596 Paris France-Info Radio in French 1600 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The latest on Jacques Chirac's visit to Saudi Arabia: the head of state took advantage of the occasion of his visit this morning to the Office of Geological and Mining Research to salute the 30 years of the French presence in the Saudi kingdom. [passage omitted]

The French president later had talks with the Saudi interior and defense ministers and with Crown Prince 'Abdallah. France and Saudi Arabia have decided to step up their anti-terrorist cooperation. President Chirac also said that he wanted a rapid clarification from the new Israeli Government on whether the peace process in the Middle East is to be continued or not. Jacques Chirac:

[Begin Chirac recording] The risk is obviously that the uncertainty could lead to a resumption of terrorism. This is not an academic hypothesis. It is a genuine risk. There are people, there are organizations that have an interest in things going badly, in the peace process being abandoned for good, in terrorism taking off again. It is a real risk. [end recording]

Tomorrow [8 July], before returning to Paris, Jacques Chirac will spend a few hours in Qatar.

Saudi Arabia: Chirac Urges U.S. To Honor Middle East Commitments

LD0707181996 Paris France-Inter Radio Network in French 1700 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Peace in the Middle East and the fight against terrorism: two closely linked issues which have taken up the bulk of the meeting this afternoon in Saudi Arabia between Jacques Chirac and Crown Prince 'Abdallah. On this matter, the French president addressed himself very specifically to the Americans and the Israelis. Here he is:

[Begin Chirac recording] I understand perfectly that today the United States is in a slightly special situation, because they are in an election campaign, and everyone knows that in all countries in the world election campaigns impose constraints. But I understand perfectly

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the importance which the United States attaches — as do we — to Israel's security; but they must understand, and I have said this to President Clinton, that when commitments are made they must be honored. Otherwise there is a danger of arousing great anxiety, which may — out of which the worst thing may emerge — the worst thing being of course a resumption of terrorism. If Israel decides to continue the peace process, then I hope it will say so as quickly as possible. If it decided to abandon this process, then I would hope it took a little more time to reflect. [end recording]

Saudi Arabia: Prince Faysal on Talks With French Foreign Minister

LD0707152696 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1430 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Royal Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, foreign minister, has said that King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, and French President Jacques Chirac have charged the foreign ministers of the two countries with the task of examining the bases and foundations of the progress of bilateral relations and the possibility of common coordination between the two countries in issues which concern them, particularly the issues of the Middle East region, and more specifically the two sides' common stances on the progress of the peace process.

His royal highness pointed out in a press statement after his meeting today with French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette that the two sides agreed that Resolution 242 is the basis of the peace process in the Middle East. He stated that France has an important role in bringing this resolution to life in its capacity as a permanent member of the Security Council.

Saudi Arabia: Defense Minister Plays Down Rumored Arms Deal With France

LD0707000896 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 2245 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Jeddah, 6 Jul (SPA) — His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, second deputy prime minister and minister of defence and aviation and inspector-general, has said that his meeting with His Excellency Charles Millon, the French defense minister, was not so much aimed at signing a new arms deal as it was aimed at reaffirming the cooperation between the two states and reviewing the agreements in force at present.

His highness said, in a statement to reporters after his meeting today in Jeddah, that "any new [agreement] will come about, God willing, when the time is right and the juncture is right."

For his part Millon stated that President Chirac's present visit to the kingdom was one of cooperation and friendship. He said in a similar statement that he was happy to accompany President Chirac on this visit. He added that this visit reaffirmed the friendship and cooperation between his country and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

He said: "I have strong relations of friendship with Prince Sultan and we wove these relations a year ago." He further said: "Since my arrival here I wanted to meet his highness and hold talks with him."

Saudi Arabia: Prince Bandar—Ties to U.S. Cannot Be Shaken by Terrorism

LD0607142896 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Royal Highness Prince Bandar Bin-Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, ambassador of the custodian of the two holy mosques to the United States, has reiterated that Saudi-U.S. relations are strong and cannot be shaken by the reverberations of terrorist bombings and acts and that military cooperation will continue between the two countries to protect peace in the region.

In a statement published in today's AL-SHARQ magazine, his highness praised the competence of the Saudi security men and their brilliant success in finding the perpetrators of the previous bombing in Riyadh.

He reiterated that they will, with God's guidance and their own efforts, find those responsible for the bombing in al-Khubar.

He pointed out, however, that the search for those criminals falls within the competency of the Ministry of Interior and its officials, and asserted that, given their high standards, their efforts will bear fruit, God willing.

His Highness Prince Bandar Bin-Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz recalled the recent statement made by the U.S. Congress on the importance of Saudi-American relations and on the need to continue bolstering them.

His highness went on to say: A technical cooperation is under way. A Saudi-American investigating team has been set up to identify the criminals and find out more about the circumstances of the bombing. This is a measure which falls within the framework of cooperation with friends in technical and security matters, he added.

Furthermore, his highness stated that Saudis and Arabs living in the United States, are leading normal lives; they are respected and loved by their American friends, he reiterated.

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Yemen

Yemen: Iranian Delegation Arrives for Oil Cooperation Talks

JN0607193596 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 6 Jul 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Brother Dr. (Mohammad Najad Hoseynian), Iranian deputy petroleum minister and Petroleum Ministry under secretary for international affairs, arrived in Sanaa today. He is leading a delegation comprising of a number of experts and specialists in the Iranian oil industry.

In a statement to the YEMENI NEWS AGENCY, SABA', the Iranian official said he will hold talks with the brother officials at the Oil and Mineral Resources Ministry in continuation of the Yemeni-Iranian talks which began during the recent visit to Tehran by brother Dr. Muhammad Sa'id al-'Attar, deputy prime minister and minister of oil and mineral resources.

The Iranian official pointed out that discussions will address cooperation in the field of promoting the Aden refinery, training the Yemeni oil cadres in Iran, and refining the Iranian oil at the Aden refinery. He lauded the current level of Yemeni-Iranian political relations as well as the efforts of both countries to promote bilateral relations, including in the field of oil industry. [passage omitted]

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Iraq: Jordanian Weekly Reports Explosion Destroys Saddam's Palace

JN0607123896

[FBIS Report] The Jordanian weekly AL-HAQIQAH on 4 July publishes on page 9 an approximately 2,000-word, unattributed article on the Iraqi regime and its reliance on support from the al-Tikriti family and the al-Anbar tribes of al-Juburi and al-Dulaymi. Under the headline: "President Saddam Husayn Escapes Most Serious Assassination Attempt; Saddam's al-Anbar Palace Completely Destroyed by Explosives," the article notes that the execution of Major General Muhammad Mazlum al-Dulaymi caused the al-Dulaymi tribe's dissatisfaction with the Saddam regime. The article says the following about the alleged assassination attempt:

"Thus, the extent of the relationship between Saddam Husayn and the people of al-Anbar Government becomes very clear. Saddam Husayn has a palace in the Governorate and the palace guards are extremely loyal to the president. As we have mentioned, the president thought that he could make his personal guards more loyal to him than to their own tribes and families. However, a terrible explosion completely destroyed his palace in al-Anbar after one of the palace guards from an al-Anbar tribe, which has been locked in bitter struggle with Saddam ever since he executed a number of its members, planted explosives there. This terrible explosion forced the Iraqi president to drastically revise his calculations. A great number of guard officers from the al-Dulaymi and al-Juburi tribes were arrested and kept isolated. Others within his personal bodyguards were dismissed.

"The president was in his al-Anbar Governorate Palace. However, he left only a few minutes before the explosion, which was heard by the president himself. The president returned immediately to witness the results of the suicide operation which was carried out by one of the palace guards. The guard was inside, working on the bomb's timing device. He did not know that the president would leave only a few minutes after his arrival. Thus, President Saddam Husayn escaped the most dangerous assassination attempt which turned the palace into a heap of rubble and which could have killed him if had not left the palace a few minuted earlier. A large number of guard soldiers and officers and a number of those acompanying the president were killed. The president was scheduled to return to the palace after an inspection tour of the governorate. It was noticed that over the past days the Iraqi media carried cables from al-Anbar Governorate tribal chiefs expressing allegiance to Saddam Husayn but did not mention the explosion. Baghdad has not yet disclosed the incident, but news of it spread to most Iraqi towns and among Iraqis."

Iraq: Oil Sales Agreement With UN Expected Within 'Next Few Days'

JN0707071296 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2012 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 6 Jul (INA) — Lieutenant General Engineer 'Amir Muhammad Rashid, minister of oil, asserted that the list of procedures between Iraq and the United Nations will be finalized within the next few days after securing initial approval for the arrival of supervisors and technicians specialized in oil contracts.

The oil minister was speaking at a news conference held today after the signing of the cooperation protocol between Iraq and Ukraine. The news conference was attended by correspondents of Arab and foreign news agencies and world television networks in Baghdad. He said he expects government delegations to arrive from many countries to conclude agreements to purchase Iraqi oil under the memorandum of understanding signed with the United Nations.

Iraq: Oil Minister Says U.S. Efforts To Stop Deal 'Failed'

NC0707084496 Paris AFP in English 0843 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, July 6 (AFP) — Iraq's oil minister, General 'Amir Muhammad Rashid, said his government hoped to sign contracts with foreign companies and begin exporting oil in two weeks under the UN oil-for-food deal.

Rashid told reporters late Saturday [6 July] that Baghdad hoped UN Secretary-General Butros Butros-Ghali would approve an Iraqi plan to distribute food from the limited sale of oil in the next week.

"Then we will sign contracts with (foreign) companies and four or five days later the tankers would arrive and be filled with Iraqi oil," Rashid said.

"We are still optimistic despite the malicious intentions of some parties on the (UN) Security Council," the minister added.

"American attempts" to prevent the implementation of the oil-for-food deal between the United Nations and Iraq "have failed," he said.

Although an agreement in principle was reached May 20, obstacles remain on the details of the plan, which allows Iraq to sell up to two billion dollars worth of

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oil every six months to buy badly needed food and medicines.

It is a partial lifting of the crippling economic embargo placed on Iraq for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

U.S. officials have said the Iraqi plan is unacceptable because it gives Baghdad too much control over food distribution, particularly in areas controlled by rebel Kurds.

But diplomats at the United Nations in New York said they were encouraged by the progress of discussions between UN and Iraqi officials, adding that Baghdad was revising its plans and a solution was likely to be found to overcome U.S. objections.

"As soon as the UN approves the distribution plan, companies will be invited to sign contracts," Rashid said.

The Security Council on Friday left intact the six-year-old economic embargo on Iraq after another 60-day review, UN diplomats said. The sanctions had been reviewed for the 32nd time in a closed-door meeting of the Council.

Diplomatic sources said the United States and Britain continued to maintain a hard line on any movement to lift the sanctions despite efforts by Russia and France to be flexible.

UN and U.S. officials have said the question of Iraqi disarmament is far from being settled, with numerous questions remaining on Baghdad's military program and UN monitoring required under Security Council resolutions.

Iraq: French Presidency Official Comments on UN Oil-for-Food Deal

JN0807140496 Baghdad INA in English 1020 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, July 8, INA — A member of the Consultant Council for Foreign Affairs at the French Presidency has described the deal between Iraq and the U.N. on oil for food and medicine as an initial and important step towards the lifting of the embargo.

In a statement to INA, he said that despite the fact that the deal is a limited measure, it contributes to ending the suffering of the Iraqi people emanating from the acute shortages of food and medicines.

He said the deal will give the international companies and bodies the chance to resume their dealings with Iraq in the common interest of both sides.

The signing of the memorandum of understanding was a new hope for all parties who have a deep history of constructive cooperation with Iraq which led major French companies as well as other Western ones to rush to resume their contact with Iraq, he added.

He went on to say that French companies have sent their representatives to Baghdad to hold talks with Iraqi officials on the practical steps to implement this deal and the possibility of winning contracts to export medicines and foodstuff to Iraq.

He added that the deal indicates the wisdom of dealing with the international resolutions in a way as to gradually bring about an end to the plight undergone by the Iraqi people.

He renewed France's stand which supports Iraq and its continuous work to lift the embargo completely.

Iraq: 'Aziz Confers With French Figure on 'U.S. Obstacles'

JN0707105096 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0958 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 7 Jul (INA)—Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz received Serge Buadvay [name as transliterated], member of the Advisory Council for Foreign Affairs at the French Presidency [title as received] today.

Talks dealt with Iraqi-French relations and the importance of developing them in all fields. Talks also dealt with Iraq's relations with the Security Council and the Special Commission, and the U.S. obstacles in the way of implementing the memorandum of understanding on oil for food and medicine.

Tariq 'Aziz emphasized the important role of France and other members which want, through the legal implementation of Security Council resolutions, to prevent interferences that have tendentious political objectives and to work seriously to lift the unjust siege imposed on Iraq.

Iraq: Opposition Leader—Saddam Only Interested in Vengeance

MS0807120096 London INDEPENDENT in English 8 Jul 96 p 13

[Letter by Ahmad al-Jalabi, President of the Executive Council, Iraqi National Congress, London: "Saddam Plans To Hoodwink UN"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sir: Saddam Husayn has a passion for vengeance — just ask his sons-in-law. Your report "Defector Exposes Saddam's Lies" (5 July) gives further evidence that Saddam is interested only

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in vengeance and not in distributing food and medical supplies to the Iraqi people despite agreeing to the UN's "oil-for-food" resolution.

He has submitted a food distribution plan to the UN that calls for the import of advanced dual-use technology that will be used to build up his military capacity. For example, he has requested sophisticated computers allegedly to be used for education. But in the past, computers imported by Iraqi educational institutions have been used in weapons research. The regime has also requested spare parts for helicopters which they claim will be used for agricultural spraying. However, these same helicopters can be used for chemical and biological attacks against the Iraqi people and against neighbouring countries.

When the "oil-for-food" resolution is implemented, Saddam will attempt to divert the $400m currently used for the Iraqi rationing system to build up his military capacity. The UN must increase its vigilance.

Iraq: Ukrainian Official, Oil Minister Discuss Signed Protocol

JN0707202496 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 7 Jul 96

[Interview with Yevhen Dovzhko, head of the Ukrainian State Committee on Oil and Gas Industry, and Iraqi Oil Minister Lieutenant General Engineer 'Amir Muhammad Rashid by Nada Sawqi; place and date not given—recorded; Dovzhko speaks in Ukrainian with superimposed sentence-by-sentence translation into Arabic]

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraq and Ukraine signed a protocol of bilateral cooperation in the oil, industrial, commercial, higher education, transport, and communications fields last night. The protocol was signed for Iraq by Lieutenant General Engineer 'Amir Muhammad Rashid, the oil minister, and for Ukraine by Yevhen Dovzhko, head of the Ukrainian State Committee on Oil and Gas Industry. Nada Shawqi reports:

[Begin recording] [Shawqi] Head of Ukrainian State Committee on Oil and Gas Industry: We would like to know the main points in the agreement signed by Ukraine and Iraq.

[Dovzhko] I would like to express my satisfaction and great appreciation of the outcome of this visit. At the end of the visit, I belief the main achievement is the mutual desire for joint, fruitful cooperation between the two countries. This is the main point in, or the main substance of, this protocol. Of course, there are articles in the protocol that demand that we implement what was agreed upon. The protocol covers many dimensions of the fruitful cooperation. Now Ukraine and Iraq must implement everything [that was agreed upon]. The results of our action confirm that we will implement everything documented in this protocol.

[Shawqi] Lt. Gen. Eng. 'Amir Muhammad Rashid, the oil minister: How important is this agreement between Ukraine and Iraq, especially since that Iraq will soon resume its oil exports, God willing?

[Rashid] I must thank Iraqi Television for giving me this opportunity. We had contacts at the level of experts between Iraq and Ukraine during the past few years, but this was the first visit to Iraq on a governmental level. During this visit, we were able to define clear and specific tracks for cooperation between Iraq and Ukraine in the industrial, higher education, and oil and gas fields. Ukraine has large industrial resources and an enormous industrial base. Iraq has always sought to build and complete the infrastructure for an industrial base. Therefore, the prospects for cooperation between Iraq and Ukraine are great. Additionally, Ukraine needs the energy resources, oil and gas, and Iraq can be a main supplier of oil and gas to Ukraine. In fact, what was agreed upon in the protocol of understanding is a model for economic integration in the international relations between any two states. Ukraine needs Iraq's oil and gas, and Iraq needs Ukraine for transferring the industrial expertise. We set specific steps, which we hope we will translate into detailed agreements and contracts to develop the resources of the two countries. We are optimistic. The talks were held in an friendly, constructive, and professional atmosphere on the level of experts. This protocol will open new prospects for the implementation of the understanding with the United Nations.

[Shawqi] Thank you. [end recording]

Iraq: Syrian Official on Coordination of Stand on Water Issue

JN0607165196 Baghdad INA in English 1040 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, July 6, INA—A senior Syrian official has said his current visit to Iraq aims to coordinate Syrian-Iraqi stances on the division of water of the Tigris and Euphrates between Turkey, Syria, and Iraq.

In a statement to AL-JUMHURIYAH daily, head of the Syrian Water Experts Committee Ambassador Muhammad Munib al-Rifa'i said he will meet with Iraqi officials in the Joint Technical Committee in implementation of the accord signed by Iraq and Turkey in 1980 and later by Syria in 1983.

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The Syrian aide said the meetings aim to lay down the technical and legal bases to delineate the joint international waters (Tigris and Euphrates). He added that there is a Tripartite Technical Committee formed in accordance with the 1980 accord to lay down the bases, in two years time, for the distribution of water to be referred to the authorities concerned or endorsement.

However, regrettably, the committee has not achieved the aim for which it had been formed because of evasion by the Turkish side which is building projects on the Euphrates and wants to complete them before reaching an agreement to make it a fait accompli for Syria and Iraq, a thing which contravenes international law and the acquired norms and rights.

Regarding the topic of water between Iraq and Syria, the Syrian ambassador made it clear that there are no differences between the two sides. The Technical Committee has reached an agreement on water sharing whereby Iraq would take 58 percent of the water while Syria would have 42 percent of water coming from Turkey on the Turkish-Syrian border, he said.

The Syrian official added that the accord is permanent pending the conclusion of a final agreement with Turkey. He demanded the Turkish side to give this sensitive issue proper attention and speed up the finalization of the Technical Committee's work.

Ambassador al-Rifa'i lauded the warm welcome he received in Iraq, saying that Syrians feel that they and the Iraqis are one people with strong ties like those of blood and common destiny.

Iraq: Water Sharing Talks With Syria Conclude in Baghdad

JN0707103196 Baghdad INA in Arabic
0918 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 7 Jul (INA)—The coordination meeting between Iraq and Syria on joint international water concluded here today.

'Abd-al-Sattar Salman Husayn, senior undersecretary of the Iraqi Irrigation Ministry said the two sides signed joint minutes of meetings on aspects of coordination between the two countries in this field.

He added that these meetings are a continuation of the coordination meetings that are held periodically in Baghdad and Damascus to exchange basic information according to which the performance policies and management of water resources are decided and for which plans are set. The meetings will greatly benefit the efforts of the two sides to reach a tripartite agreement that ensures a fair and reasonable distribution of the Euphrates and Tigris river water.

He emphasized that the agreement which both Iraq and Syria want to conclude with neighboring Turkey is based on the principles of international law that regulate the use of international river water among littoral states based on internationally-applied standards concerning a just and reasonable distribution of water.

The senior undersecretary of the Irrigation Ministry said both sides hope to resume the tripartite meetings as soon as possible, because they believe in the importance of negotiations and consultations between Turkey, Syria, and Iraq to reach a tripartite agreement on the distribution of the Euphrates and Tigris river water on the basis of international law.

Iraq: Italy Said Planning To Open Interests Section in Baghdad

JN0707151696 Baghdad INA in English
1355 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, July 7, INA — A section for the Italian interests in Iraq will be opened in Baghdad within the next few weeks, member of the Italian Senate Leono Dayana [name as received] said.

The Iraqi AL-QADISIYAH daily quoted the Italian senator as saying in press statements that the coming few weeks will witness a considerable progress in the Iraq-Italy relation.

Assistance head of the Middle East Department of the Italian Foreign Ministry Diego Brazilioli had visited Iraq recently to discuss the arrangements necessary to open the section.

The visit was followed by another one paid by an Italian delegation representing political and parliamentary personalities as well as businessmen to discuss the same matter.

Also, an Italian delegation comprised of 34 representatives of big Italian companies visited Iraq at the end of last year and discussed with the Iraqi officials best means to do joint activities in both countries.

Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz had stressed late last year that Italy intends to reopen its diplomatic representation in Iraq.

That coincided with a similar statements given by Iraq's Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf that Iraq looks forward to normalize its relations with the world countries. Al-Sahhaf had expressed hope that 1996 will witness important steps in this regard.

Speaking to the Iraqi daily, the Italian senator stressed the importance of restoring diplomatic relations with Iraq.

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The Iraqi daily pointed out that a 55-member Italian delegation currently visiting Iraq met with the Iraqi officials to enhance and develop the relations between Iraq and Italy in a way as to serve both countries' interests.

Iraq: Defector Claims Regime Has 40 Missiles, Biological Shells

NC0707185796 London MBC Television in Arabic 1816 GMT 7 Jul 96

[Interview with Major General Wafiq al-Samarra'i, Iraqi opposition figure and former head of military intelligence, by news presenter Nicole Tannuri in the MBC Television news studio in London—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Tannuri] General, you left Iraq a year and a half ago. Why do you regard your information about Iraq's weapons as being correct after all this time?

[Al-Samarra'i] Real opposition is the opposition that maintains contacts with people inside the country.

[Tannuri] What specific information do you have about these weapons?

[Al-Samarra'i] We know that the regime still possesses 40 al-Husayn, that is improved Scud, missiles. They are fitted with conventional, bacteriological, and chemical warheads. The regime also possesses 250 biological shells.

[Tannuri] Why don't you mention the places where these missiles are kept?

[Al-Samarra'i] We have frankly stated that we will never use the tools of others to clear Iraq of biological and other banned weapons while allowing Saddam to remain in power. We want both to be removed together. We don't want either to stay.

[Tannuri] Do you have contact with the UN inspection teams?

[Al-Samarra'i] I will not deny that they have contacted me more than once. We will resort without hesitation to any action that serves our people and helps to rescue the region from all these dangers and from despotism.

[Tannuri] What do you know about the Kuwaiti POW's?

[Al-Samarra'i] There are several hundred POW's in Iraq. They are continually moved from one place to another.

[Tannuri] Why do they move them? Where are they now?

[Al-Samarra'i] No one can pinpoint the place where they are held, except for a short period, because they are constantly being moved from one place to another: al-Radwaniyah, Karkuk, Mosul, Baghdad. This is done periodically to prevent UN officials from finding them.

[Tannuri] How many are they?

[Al-Samarra'i] Several hundred. Not fewer than 400.

[Tannuri] Gen. al-Samarra'i, Thank you.

Iraq: Column Warns of Iranian Threat, 'Disaster' in Bahrain

JN0707145896 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 9 Jul 96 p 8

["AL-THAWRAH Diary" column by Husayn al-Shahrabli: "Who Would Have Dared Touch a Single Hair of Manama's Head?"]

[FBI Translated Text] Iran is plotting against Bahrain, this time officially. In the future, it will probably do more than plot, and its complicity will be proven in the infiltrations and incidents that other Gulf states will witness. I am sure that every Bahraini and Gulf Arab today is letting out an outcry across the Arabian Gulf waves: O God! If only Iraq were here!

Who would have dared touch Bahrain or any other Gulf country when the Iraqi giant was out of the bottle with all of its chains smashed? Would Iran or anyone else have dared touch a single hair of Manama's head? O God! If only Iraq were here!

If there are people who want to exclude the Iraqi role in guarding the eastern gateway of the Arab nation and defending the honor of the Arabs and their women, children, and future generations, the incidents in Bahrain and those that preceded and succeeded them have filled the heart of every Gulf Arab with immense regret, which is bound to swell and burst, to be felt even by the fish in the Gulf. O God! If only Iraq were here!

Iraq has fulfilled its national duty to the Arabs, and the Gulf people in particular, with merit, honor, and rivers of blood. Thus history certifies and the world recognizes that Iraq was first among the peoples of the Arab nation to win the free conscience award for protecting Arab lands, lives, and property. Thanks to Baghdad, not a single iqal [Arab head gear, the symbol of honor] was removed or a single flag defiled.

This prompts us to ask the following legitimate questions: In whose interests is Iraq being chained again? In whose interests are they trying by every means to squeeze this national, regional, and international power into the death corner? In whose interests are they caging the lion? Since when has the barren plateau brushed shoulders with the lofty mountain? Providing answers

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to these questions is useful. All of this is happening in the interests of the foreign presence in the region, which is represented by the United States and the Zionists: the two faces of a single coin. It is also in the interests of the old, but new, Iranian ambitions.

The naughty boy of the Gulf is still quarrelsome. He thumps on chests, clambers on shoulders, and scratches cheeks, but the United States is happy. The naughty boy knows that Washington is pleased. It is a role the state of world arrogance expects from that feeble policeman, whom we pensioned off but is now back to harm the Arabs and serve foreign interests under the cover of strengthening the U.S. military presence against a potential Iranian threat. Otherwise, what do we call what has happened in Bahrain: the explosions, the assassinations, and the terrorist political movement which seeks to replace the present regime with another one linked to Iran? All of that has happened with the knowledge of the United States and within its very sight.

Our Gulf brethren are primarily responsible for what is happening in Bahrain. What has happened and is happening in Manama should not be slighted. If the occupied Arab islands have not been a lesson to those who have tried to forget or pretend to forget the aggression on Iraq, the storm threatening Bahrain will force us to experience two disasters. You cannot have not forgotten the first disaster in Palestine. The Gulf Arabs will definitely assume responsibility for the second disaster. [not further identified] The house can only be protected by its own residents, and caging the lion will only help wolves and foxes.

The Gulf people know more than anyone else who the [word indistinct] are. Their essential stand in support of Iraq in order to remove the embargo will be a point for them. It cannot be a waste of time, since they will be supporting themselves and their own cause, which is to maintain the Arab identity of Bahrain forever. Just remember that the first disaster occurred when the Arab nation was without a lion.

Iraq: Talabani Blames KDP for Attack, Collusion With Saddam

NC0607180396 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1700 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Jalal Talabani, commander in chief of Kurdistan's Peshmerga forces, has issued the following statement:

At 1330 on the afternoon of Friday, 5 July 1996, in the wake of an intensive artillery bombardment carried out by gunmen under [Kurdistan Democratic Party, KDP, leader] Mas'ud Barzani's confused leadership, these forces launched a multipronged offensive against the positions of the Peshmerga in Girdharah and (Rabi'ah) in the Hiran area. This provoked a battle between the two sides that lasted for several hours. The attacking forces suffered a crushing defeat.

This aggression by Mas'ud Barzani's gunmen constitutes a serious continuation of their daily assaults on Kurdistan's Peshmerga forces and smacks of a plot to provoke internecine fighting again.

Does this confused leadership imagine that its assaults will pass unchallenged, like its attack on the occupied village of Qal'at Kin?

We wish to proclaim to the masses of our people and all the political parties that the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan will not remain silent vis-a-vis these assaults, the motive for which we believe is the KDP's relationship with Saddam, the executioner. Saddam wants to prevent Kurdistan from becoming an Iraqi opposition base from which an attack can be launched against his tottering dictatorship.

They must stop playing with fire, because it might not only burn their fingers but also their very homes.

It is clear that once again the responsibility for these aggressions should be laid at the feet of Mas'ud Barzani. The consequences of his actions are inevitable defeat and shame.

[Signed] The Commander in Chief of Kurdistan's Peshmerga Forces, 5 July 1996.

Iraq: Finance Ministry Details Arab Countries' Debts to Iraq

JN0607191796 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 6 Jul 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The total debt owed to Iraq by certain Arab countries totalled $1,376,259,000 as of last June. A Finance Ministry spokesman told an IRAQI NEWS AGENCY correspondent that this total includes debts and unpaid oil exports, profits confiscated by joint Arab companies, and the Iraqi banks' deposits in Saudi Arabia, Syria, Bahrain, Kuwait, Somalia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt. [passage omitted]

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Israel: Netanyahu's U.S. Agenda Detailed

TA0707100096 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 7 Jul 96 p A2

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu is leaving tomorrow for a visit to the United States, in which he will try to reach understandings on jointly working with Congress and the administration, and to establish personal relations with his host, President Bill Clinton.

The Americans will attempt to make the Israeli guest's stay pleasant, to somewhat compensate for Clinton's outspoken support for Shim'on Peres before the prime ministerial elections here.

Netanyahu's aides have said that the visit will be comprehensive and devoted to basic issues that require cooperation between Israel and the United States. According to them, "we will build the foundations for real political and security cooperation."

U.S. officials have said that Clinton is expecting to hear Netanyahu's view of the peace process. "The most urgent issue is how to make progress in the process," they stressed. Speaking in discussions in preparation for the visit, administration officials said that the President "will be attentive to Netanyahu's political concepts and will not present resolute stands."

Netanyahu has reached an understanding with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher according to which the United States will keep coordinating its peace moves with Israel and will not work against Israel, even if there are differences.

Netanyahu is arriving in Washington at a time of changes in the administration's order of priorities — stressing the promotion of the Palestinian track, while pushing Syria aside. Over the past several years, the United States considered the attainment of an Israeli-Syrian arrangement to be an issue of the highest priority. Today, the administration feels that the chances of attaining it are slim and that it is more important to keep that which has been attained — the Oslo agreements.

The "Palestinian package" Netanyahu will present to Clinton includes five elements:

— A promise in principle to carry out the redeployment in Hebron while changing the security arrangements, formed by the previous government, without making a commitment on a deadline.

— A continuation of contacts on all levels with Palestinian Authority [PA] President Yasir 'Arafat.

— An agreement in principle to lift the closure and allow Palestinian laborers to work in Israel. Over the last few days, Netanyahu has said that Israel was forced to impose the closure because of the terror attacks, and that it would lift it the minute this is possible.

— Supporting granting international aid to the PA.

— Resuming the negotiations on the permanent arrangements. In interviews before the visit, Netanyahu said that he is offering the Palestinians autonomy without sovereignty in which they can manage all the aspects of life that are not risky for Israel.

Clinton will also want to hear Netanyahu's stand on the Syrian track and find out where Netanyahu is ready to make progress. Netanyahu will present his view that security-related interim arrangements should be attained with Syria, and will not oppose an interim arrangement with Lebanon. During the visit, an effort will be made to complete the agreement on establishing the monitoring committee to supervise the understandings on Lebanon.

In his talks with the U.S. Administration and Congress, Netanyahu will strongly stress the need to fight terrorism. He will demand that Syria and Iran, the terror-supporting countries, be condemned. He will focus on having the attitude toward Syria changed and on having the United States stop ignoring Damascus' involvement in terror.

[A related report by Aluf Ben on pages A1 and A10 of the same HA'ARETZ issue adds "that, in preparation for his U.S. visit, Netanyahu has ordered Dani Yatom, the Mosad head, and Major General Moshe Ya'alon, head of the army's Intelligence Branch, to present him with a document detailing Syria's contacts with terror organizations, and list terror acts by groups whose headquarters are in Damascus or in Lebanese territory under Syrian rule. The intelligence community has also been asked to prepare another document for him detailing Iranian involvement in terrorism." "The prime minister will say that stopping terror against Israel, from Lebanon and elsewhere, will be a precondition for progress in the negotiations with Syria."

[The report further says: "It appears that the prime minister will tell President Clinton that, under certain circumstances, Israel will consider an interim arrangement in Lebanon in which Israel would withdraw from the security zone if it is made certain that Hizballah terror will stop and the security of the northern border is observed. Over the weekend, Netanyahu's bureau denied reports according to which, in his conversation with Clinton, Netanyahu will suggest that Israel pull out of the security zone as a first step in negotiations with Syria."]

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With the bombing of the U.S. military base in Saudi Arabia as a backdrop, Netanyahu's arrival in the United States is well timed. In his conversations with Secretary of State Christopher, it has been agreed to increase pressure on Iran and expand cooperation against terror.

The prime minister will also raise expanding U.S.-Israeli strategic cooperation regarding joint regional interests. He will raise the problems of Israeli-Egyptian relations and the rise to power of the Muslim party in Turkey.

Congressmen who will hear Netanyahu's festive address to both houses will pose difficult questions regarding the future of the civilian aid to Israel of some $1.2 billion annually. When he was in the opposition, Netanyahu expressed his adamant support for cutting back civilian aid, against the background of the stand against extending foreign aid promoted by the Republican majority in Congress.

Columnist Abe Rosenthal, Netanyahu's friend, has urged him to voluntarily waive the civilian aid. The prime minister's Israeli advisers told him that he should not presently waive the aid, saying that he had better state that his government is introducing a thorough economic reform, upon the completion of which Israel would be able to live without U.S. grants.

Finance Minister Dan Meridor has said in closed discussions that it is too early to talk of cutting back aid. Netanyahu associates said that he will speak of the future of the U.S. aid "along the lines he mentioned in the past."

[A related report by David Lipkin and Ben Kaspit on page 6 of Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew on 7 July adds: "There is sharp opposition in the Finance Ministry to ideas examined at the prime minister's bureau according to which Israel will initiate a move of gradually waiving the U.S. aid in return for writing off part of its debts to the United States." "The persons behind this idea assume that the economic damage it might cause to Israel would be minimal because most of the civilian aid — all of it in some years — returns to the United States within the framework of Israel's debt repayment."]

Netanyahu will devote much of his time to explaining his economic policy. He will hold meetings with the U.S. Treasury and trade secretaries and Wall Street businessmen. The prime minister is not carrying a defense shopping list, nor are there urgent security matters to discuss with the administration.

Also on Netanyahu's agenda is raising a request to pardon convicted spy Jonathan Pollard and making efforts to free POW navigator Ron Arad. The prime minister will also ask for U.S. assistance in settling the matter of Jewish Agency operations in and the continuation of immigration from Russia.

Israel: Cabinet Has 'No Clear Idea' on Netanyahu's U.S. Positions

TA0507145996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The inner cabinet met today after the cabinet session. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that nevertheless its members still have no clear idea about the positions Prime Minister Netanyahu will present in his meetings in the United States next week.

Our correspondent adds that Internal Security Minister Avigdor Qahalani presented proposals to step up the presence of the Israeli authorities in East Jerusalem.

Israel: U.S. Said Not Pinning 'Much Hope' on Netanyahu Visit

TA0507181696 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 5 Jul 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu will leave on his first official visit to the United States at the beginning of next week, but U.S. Administration officials do not pin much hope on the visit. A senior U.S. official today told our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen that President Clinton is aware of the fact that the prime minister has not had enough time to consolidate firm positions on political issues. Nevertheless, sources in Jerusalem say that Netanyahu will present to Clinton the arrangement he favors in Hebron and a proposal to hold joint patrols in the city.

As for today's cabinet session, the Netanyahu government does not plan to close down Orient House in East Jerusalem for the time being. The Ministerial Committee on Jerusalem met today, but did not make any decision on the issue. Netanyahu said in the cabinet meeting that no decision had yet been made on the Hebron issue. Minister Beni Begin quoted statements made by senior Palestinians attesting to cooperation between Fatah and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]. Our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen reports that the head of the Shin Bet replied that he did not know about these statements, but noted that the Shin Bet is aware of cooperation between junior Fatah activists and Hamas men.

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Israel: Netanyahu Postpones U.S. Trip for Knesset Debate on Sharon

TA0707082996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu is postponing for several hours his departure for the United States to enable him to participate in a Knesset debate on the establishment of the infrastructures portfolio for Ari'el Sharon.

Our party affairs correspondent Yaron Deqel said there is still no certainty that the Knesset will be asked to approve on Monday [8 July] the proposal for Sharon to join the cabinet. It is possible that the prime minister will make do with approval for the establishment of the infrastructures portfolio while Sharon's appointment will be put off for a week when Netanyahu returns from the United States.

Close aides of Foreign Minister David Levi ridiculed Agudat Yisra'el's proposal that Levi give up the post of acting prime minister so that it can be transferred to Ari'el Sharon. The aides said it is an absurd idea and not even on the agenda. Our correspondent Yaron Deqel reports that Levi's aides say that only if Agudat Yisra'el brings the idea up officially will Levi react to it.

Agudat Yisra'el's newspaper said this morning that Levi's movement is the only one not to give up anything for the infrastructure portfolio. Therefore, giving up the post of acting prime minister would help to overcome the crisis.

Israel: Netanyahu's Departure for U.S. 'so Far Not Changed'

TA0707112496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] It is still unclear whether Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu will present for Knesset approval tomorrow the establishment of the National Infrastructures Ministry and Ari'el Sharon's appointment to the cabinet. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir notes that the prime minister has so far not changed his scheduled departure for Washington.

The prime minister conferred with President Weizman at noon and updated him on the political moves on the eve of his trip to the United States. Our correspondent Yitzhaq Feller reports that the meeting lasted about an hour.

Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger conferred with the prime minister for about an hour this morning, but refused to say what they discussed. In Kissinger's view, the peace process started by Yitzhaq Rabin will continue. All leaders will reach the conclusion that the process is vital for Israel even if there are differences in emphasis and content.

Israel: Netanyahu Anticipates 'Successful' U.S. Visit

TA0807070596 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0505 GMT 8 Jul 96

[Telephone interview with Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu by Razi Barqay on 8 July; place not given — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Barqay] You are about to make a very important trip to the United States, your first as prime minister. Will you inform President Clinton of whether and when you plan to evacuate Hebron?

[Netanyahu] First of all, I am not required to announce anything. I will make these decisions in accordance with my own timetable and not anyone else's. I have to tell you that I am going there at President Clinton's invitation in order to do what any newly elected prime minister does: to renew, bolster, and reinforce relations between the new Israeli Government and the incumbent U.S. Government. I think it is going to be a successful visit.

[Barqay] Let me rephrase my question: Have you decided whether Hebron will be evacuated and when?

[Netanyahu] No. I am considering the matter. I definitely plan to consult with my government associates before finally and formally deciding the entire Hebron issue which, as you know, is highly complex. I wouldn't want to do anything that might harm the safety of the Jewish residents there and the security of the most ancient Jewish settlement in the world. We bear a great responsibility both for the settlement and for the ancient tradition of the Jewish people, as well as for peace. I think that a rash move in Hebron or anywhere else may result in outbursts of violence and a deterioration in security, which would hurt both the peace process and the Palestinians.

[Barqay] Will the situation in the city of Hebron be the same in three months or will changes take place? Can you tell us that at this point in time?

[Netanyahu] I cannot tell you because I am not a psychic, but I can tell you that, as far as I am concerned, the policy will consist of meticulously safeguarding the security of Jews and Arabs alike.

[Barqay] Mr. Prime Minister, do you realize that the United States will be receiving a man whose nature it is not quite certain of? They do not know whether he is a certified hawk or one capable of surprising them, as Menahem Begin did, to quote your remarks in an

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interview to a U.S. television station yesterday. Will you enlighten us as to what kind of prime minister they will be seeing this coming week?

[Netanyahu] I said I would surprise them, because the things that have been said about me and this government are amusing and sometimes even ridiculous. They say that we do not want peace, that we want war, and so forth. It's all nonsense. We were elected to bring peace; we were elected to stop the incessant waves of terrorism directed at us.

[Barqay] How will you surprise them in ways reminiscent of Menahem Begin, Mr. Prime Minister? Didn't Menahem Begin coin the phrase Greater Israel and end up giving back every inch of the Sinai?

[Netanyahu] Well, he did not view the Sinai as part of Eretz Yisra'el. The surprise, however, stemmed from some people's erroneous assessment that a firm government that insists on security and national interests will necessarily cause a deterioration in the security situation or hinder the quest for peace. The exact opposite is true. What happens is that the Arabs — the Palestinians, Syrians, and others — get accustomed to the new reality and are forced to start making compromises of their own for a change. Incidentally, this did not happen only between Israel and the Arab countries but also between the USSR and the United States, as well as in many other countries.

[Barqay] Which means that in your conversations with President Clinton, you will say no to the partition of Jerusalem, no to territorial compromise on the Golan Heights, and no to a Palestinian state. Three noes.

[Netanyahu] I would say these are three yeses: Yes to a united Jerusalem, yes to a secure peace opposite the Syrian front, and yes to safe coexistence between us and the Palestinians. [Word indistinct] can interpret it in his own way, of course, but I insist on the basics I promised the Israeli electorate. The fact that I am going to the United States and that I will be visiting the State of Israel's greatest friend does not even slightly alter my most profound beliefs or my rudimentary pledges to the Israeli electorate. I am not trying to please anyone. [passage omitted]

Israel: Cabinet Sets Up 'One of the Largest' Ministries for Sharon

TA0807051396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0400 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] During the night, the cabinet established a National Infrastructure Ministry, which will be one of the largest in the government. It will include the Public Works Department, the Israel Land Authority, the Authority for the Development of the Negev and Galilee, and the Sewage, Mining, and Quarrying Works. It will be in charge of all the areas that previously fell under the Energy Ministry; trains and railroads; the entire water economy, with the exception of water for agriculture; and water negotiations with the autonomy and neighboring countries. The Netivey Ayalon Company, Hakarmel Administration, and the Greater Tel Aviv Company will remain under the Transportation Ministry.

[Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew on 8 July in a report by Menahem Rahat on page 7 adds that the ministry was approved "after United Torah Jewry, which holds the Construction and Housing Ministry through Deputy Minister Me'ir Porush, agreed to give up the Public Works Department" and "Agriculture Minister Refa'el Eytan agreed to hand over water negotiations with neighboring countries."]

Today, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu will inform the Knesset of the establishment of the National Infrastructure Ministry and of Ari'el Sharon's appointment as the minister in charge of that ministry. Later in the evening, the prime minister will depart for a week-long visit to the United States.

Israel: Agreement Reached on Defense Budget Cuts

TA0707050196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] An agreement has been reached on the 1997 defense budget. It is to be cut by 825 million shekels. The reduction was decided upon after a marathon overnight meeting in the Prime Minister's Office with the participation of Binyamin Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay, and Finance Minister Dan Meridor.

According to the terms of the deal, the salaries of career military officers will not be harmed. The overall cut agreed upon is just over half of what the Treasury originally requested.

A dispute remains concerning the budget of the Labor and Social Affairs Ministry. The SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] Knesset faction is to meet this morning on the matter. Minister Eliyahu Yishay will recommend voting against the budget in the Knesset if the Labor Ministry does not receive 120 million shekels for the needy. Minister Yishay also opposes the cancellation of discounts for senior citizens on public transportation. The cabinet is to meet in special session this afternoon on the 1997 budget.

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Israel: Netanyahu, Meridor, Ne'eman Brief Press on Budget Cuts

TA0707163896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1535 GMT 7 Jul 96

[News conference by Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, Finance Minister Dan Meridor, and Justice Minister Ya'aqov Ne'eman, at the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Netanyahu] Good evening. We are in the process of finalizing the government's decisions on next year's budget. The budget discussions are being held against the background of the very difficult economic legacy we inherited. I have no choice but to compare the Israeli economy to a sick person who is suffering from various ailments. Unless the patient is treated and operated on, the disease can only worsen. All operations are painful and some hurt more than others. If we do not carry out the operation, however, the patient cannot get well. And this patient will get well!

I have heard several people presenting themselves as the tribunes of the weaker classes. I would like to say that the economy, as we inherited it, in its present unhealthy state primarily punishes the weaker classes. I can state with certainty that the national debt is growing because the government spent money it did not have. Inflation is rising, and when inflation goes up so does the price of basic goods. Bread becomes more expensive. So do mortgages for young couples, and the price of apartments rises beyond their reach. Therefore, it is the weaker classes who are paying the highest price for the mistakes in the economic policy that we inherited.

In formulating this budget together with the finance minister, Treasury officials, and the governor of the Bank of Israel and his team of experts, we made a thoroughgoing and systematic effort to avoid totally — or at least to reduce as much as possible — any steps that would harm the poorer social strata. The second sphere where we exerted great effort was to refrain from harming the salaries of career officers. The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] is the basis for our security. The career officers are the army's backbone and their salary is an important component, albeit not the primary or key one, in their service to the country. Therefore, we made every possible effort to avoid cutting their salaries and indeed, their net salaries will hardly be affected. This, out of recognition and the highest esteem for the career officers' important role in guaranteeing our national security.

There is another point that must be made clear: I believe that the decisions we have made will invigorate the economy and get it back on the right track; however, this is only a partial step. The main step that we — and when I say we, I mean myself, the finance minister, and the Bank of Israel governor, because we all work together in full cooperation and also see things the same way — intend to take is to bring about the liberalization of the Israeli economy, to implement privatization, and to free resources — currently held by all kinds of cartels and conglomerates which do not follow the laws of the market — for the benefit of Israel's citizens.

We are convinced that the combination of economic liberalization and fiscal responsibility will spur economic growth. I also believe — and this will be tested over the course of time — that it will lead to an acceleration of economic growth and an increase in investments in the Israeli economy for the benefit of all the Israeli people. [passage omitted]

[Qol Yisra'el correspondent Menahem Friedman] I have two questions, Mr. Finance Minister. With all due respect, you and the prime minister have repeated more than once that your plan will not harm the weaker social strata, a statement contradicted by some parts of your plan. Previous economic programs were centered mainly around the middle classes, the ones that were described as the source of economic growth. This time these classes are taking a serious blow. Did the government consider this fact when it worked out the economic plan? My second question is for the prime minister. Mr. Prime Minister, you are taking this program to Washington, and you will probably present it to the administration's economists. What do you expect in return?

[Meridor] My friend, I have the honor of disagreeing with your statement. I deny that any social stratum will be dealt a serious blow. There was a fear that the weak strata, which are unable to sustain even a slight blow, would be subjected to a jolt. That was why we prepared a whole maze of reductions and compensations. I think we did everything possible to go easy on them. A very rich man can naturally carry on with normal life without noticing that 100 or 200 shekels are missing from his budget. There is no way you can turn a rich man into a poor man by any step of the kind we have undertaken, and we do not intend to raise taxes; I do not think anyone has proposed it. It is only natural that those who are slightly less than very rich will be touched to a greater extent by the plan, but the harm will still be slight. I think the distribution of the burden is just; we made a big effort to ensure that it is just. I do not think that any major harm is being inflicted on anyone. I think the public understands what the cabinet ministers have come to understand — that the move is essential.

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I would like to remind you that the situation was much worse in 1985, when wages were eroded by 30 percent. It was decided by the national unity government headed by Mr. Peres and supported by the Histadrut because it was necessary. A few months later, wages went back to their former proportions. We do not have to resort to such drastic measures. Our measures are much more moderate, and they do not include any harm to wage conditions — or rather, the harm is relatively very slight. I am convinced the entire public understands how important it is.

[Netanyahu] I intend to go to Washington and not ask for anything. We are not coming to ask for anything, we are coming simply to say: There is a new government out here that is putting the Israeli economy back on track, on the track of fiscal responsibility, of market forces where entrepreneurs and citizens can choose the way they wish to open businesses, where they can make good in business. I think it will convey a very strong message to investors.

I must tell you that my main economic message will be delivered in New York: on Wall Street, if I may say so, and not in Washington. That is where the message belongs. There, the message is not, Give me, but: Come and invest, because Israel is good for business. My message is that investing in Israel is sound business, not because we give out subsidies, but because we have a great, talented nation of technicians, engineers, and entrepreneurs, and those who decide to invest in this new, emerging Israel will, first of all, make money — and that is important. Second, they will create jobs, which is important. Third, they will raise the standard of living for all of us, and that is important. Fourth, they will export a lot of goods and improve our balance of payments, and that is important. All these things will happen if we do the right things. Today we are doing the first right thing. There will be more right things tomorrow, and we will do them too.

[IDF Radio correspondent Shlomi Stein] Two questions, Mr. Prime Minister. What can you tell the people who voted for you because of your pledge not to raise taxes, and are now subjected to a series of new economic decrees? My second question pertains to the decisionmaking process under which the state budget was endorsed. Many ministers received a brochure containing lengthy paragraphs on substantive changes an hour or two before they were supposed to vote on the changes. Is that serious work?

[Netanyahu] First of all, we are not raising any taxes. I suggest that you distinguish service fees from taxes, because, as you know, there is a difference, and it is a significant difference in both economic and social senses. We are doing exactly as we promised: We pledged not to levy new taxes, and we are not.

Your second question referred to our decisionmaking process. Look, I am not familiar with the history of Israeli economic decisionmaking, but I have heard from several experienced people, including Mr. Frenkel, governor of the Bank of Israel, that they cannot recall such thorough work — although it was rapid, which was necessary because the longer we wait the worse the situation will get. I heard both him and others remark that our work was very thorough, and in my view, very good. I would like to remind you that each minister is supposed to work mainly with the Finance Ministry and with me, and that is how we went about it. The ministers are naturally fully aware of their collective responsibility and of the overall consequences of the budget framework; there is no doubt or misunderstanding about this. The ministers fully understand the budget. We know exactly what we can expect, and we are doing our duty.

[TV Channel 1 correspondent 'Oded Shahar] Can we expect a modification of the rate of exchange — namely, a devaluation — in the wake of this program? My second question, with your permission: Many Knesset members, including some from the coalition, have already voiced very sharp objections to the economic plan. What are the prospects that the plan will be endorsed only by the government, and will end — as it always does, in past experience — in higher taxes?

[Netanyahu] First of all, I prefer not to prognosticate about the rate of exchange; we will have to wait and see. As for the prospects of the budget's passing in the Knesset, I am not saying it will be easy; it might be a rather formidable struggle. When my colleagues and I engage in a struggle toward an objective, however, we usually prevail. I believe the same will happen now, because all these objecting coalition Knesset members — I will not refer to the opposition, because their objections might be automatic — will have to support this plan if they truly want to improve the conditions of the weak strata. It is a one-time modification. The car veered off the road and skidded onto the shoulder; we have to get it back on the road all at once, and then it will ride a much smoother, much more promising road forward. This is what we are doing. It is an appropriate analogy, which is why it is used so frequently. This is exactly what we are doing: putting the car back on the road.

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Israel: Cabinet Approves Treasury Plan for 'Massive' Budget Cut

TA0807064496 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 8 Jul 96 p 1

[Report by David Harris]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The cabinet last night approved the Treasury's plan for a massive budget cut after a debate that lasted more than seven hours. The Treasury had presented a comprehensive blueprint for slashing government expenditures in 1997 by NIS [new Israeli shekels] 4.9 billion.

Foreign Minister David Levi, Health Minister Tzahi Hanegbi, and Tourism Minister Moshe Qatzav abstained in the final vote.

The document proposes a series of cuts ranging from drastic reductions in child allowances, standing army salaries and old age benefits, to extra medical treatment costs, and increases in public transport fares.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu described the measures as "painful but inevitable surgery," stressing "this is only a partial step."

The proposal sets out plans for a total 1997 budget of just over NIS 170b., nominally less than this year's NIS 172b. budget, without inflation adjustments.

"Clearly Israel still has the needs of a developing modern society," said Finance Minister Dan Meridor. "However, the previous government's health, education, and welfare expenditure added up to a sum that was beyond our capabilities. Hence the need for tough decisions which necessitated public courage. It would have been easier to be popular."

There is hardly a family in the country that will not be affected by the cuts, which will affect all sectors of the population.

The proposals include flat payments of NIS 10 for each visit to a doctor and NIS 20 for hospital out-patient appointments. Netanyahu said steps would be taken to ensure "a weak family" would not pay more than NIS 15 in any given month.

There will be a 50 percent reduction in child allowances for the first two children in a family with up to three children, where the main breadwinner earns more than NIS 4,500, but less than NIS 7,500. Families with a higher income than this will not receive any payment for the first two children.

The major cut in the defense budget will fall on retiring career officers. The government estimates it can save NIS 500m. in this area.

The cabinet was also asked to seek the repeal of the Demobilized Soldiers Law and the Veteran Citizens Law.

Public transport fares are set to rise by 13%, other than for senior citizens.

Employers will face a 3% hike in National Insurance contributions.

Hundreds of civil servants will lose their jobs, including 350 in public works, 100 in transport, and an undisclosed number in the Employment Service.

The law which introduced a longer school day will not be implemented until 2000 instead of 1998. This equates to some 50,000 school hours being lost.

Lottery and other gambling wins of NIS 1,000 or more will now be taxed at 20%. Previously they were tax exempt.

Capital-investment aid, which currently stands at 34%, will be slashed to 20% in first degree development areas. "Ninety percent of investments that arrive in Israel need no incentives," said Meridor.

Netanyahu was very keen to complete the budget cutting process before he leaves for the US. "Economically, my visit to Washington will be less important than my visit to New York, and especially to Wall Street, where in essence I will be telling investors that they should invest in Israel, not because of government incentives, but because of its gifted people," he told journalists.

Cuts of NIS 350m. are also being proposed for the current fiscal year. These include NIS 90m. from agriculture, NIS 73m. from the Defense Ministry, and NIS 19m. from education.

Overall, the hardest hit ministry is Defense, which has to make total savings of NIS 825m. That decision was taken as dozens of officers' wives demonstrated for a second day against cuts to regular army salaries.

Other ministries will also be severely trimmed back: Health, which will lose NIS 500m.; Construction and Housing, which will suffer a NIS 246m. cut; and the Finance Ministry, which will lose NIS 292m .

Despite accusations from his Shas [Torah Observing Sephardim] colleagues that he did not fight his battle hard enough, Labor and Social Affairs Minister Eli Yishay is said to be totally satisfied that all his requests were met by the final budget proposal. The ministry is receiving an additional NIS 150m. on the 1996 figure.

Opposition politicians immediately criticized the measures, despite Netanyahu's comment that, "we looked after the weaker strata of society."

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Histadrut Chairman MK [Knesset Member] 'Amir Peretz (Labor) gave reporters his response. "I refuse to believe that something like this could happen." Last week, Peretz said he would not rule out strike action if the proposals attacked workers and their rights.

"The most powerful word I can find is mourning, if not worse than that," said former finance minister Avraham Shohat. Both Netanyahu and Meridor have said the cuts have to be implemented as a direct consequence of Shohat's fiscal policies in 1995 and 1996.

Nearly 1/3 of the NIS 170m. budget will not be used for current expenditures, but for debt repayment and services.

The Knesset must approve the final 1997 budget no later than October 28.

Israel: HADASH Submits No-Confidence Motion Over Budget Cuts

TA0607152696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The first no-confidence motion in the new government: HADASH [Democratic Front for Peace and Equality] has submitted a no-confidence motion over the budget cuts, which it believes will deal a lethal blow to social services. HADASH will hold a protest vigil opposite the Prime Minister's Office tomorrow.

Israel: Meretz No-Confidence Motion Notes 'Cruel' Economic Measures

TA0807073596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0700 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Meretz faction has submitted a motion of no confidence in the government over the economic plan. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that Meretz has announced that the cruel economic measures breach the trust the public placed in the Netanyahu government.

Israel: HA'ARETZ Gives Details of Defense Ministry Budget Cut

TA0807110496 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 8 Jul 96 p A3

[Report by Judy Maltz]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] At 0630 on 7 July, after nine hours of discussion, the defense establishment and the Finance Ministry reached an agreement on the size of the cut in the 1997 defense budget. The compromise, reached with the mediation of Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, is to deduct 825 million shekels from next year's defense budget. The Finance Ministry's original proposal mentioned a cut of 1.7 billion shekels.

The main cut — over 500 million shekels — will be made in the retirement plan for career army personnel. According to data the Finance Ministry presented yesterday, the severance pay for retiring army personnel adds up to an average of 2 million shekels per person. For senior army personnel, this adds up to approximately 4 million shekels per person.

Following are the main areas in which the budget was cut:

— Payment of the 1.6 percent cost-of-living adjustment that was supposed to be paid next October will be put off.

— The number of career personnel retiring from the army will be limited to 1,300 in 1997.

— The number of days of sick leave that may be converted into a cash payment will be reduced, and the number of paid days off that may be taken prior to retirement will be slashed from 12 to nine months.

— The program for protecting public buses, launched in the wake of the massive terror attacks in February and March, will be canceled.

— The Demobilized Soldiers Law will be canceled.

— The minimum retirement age will be raised from 40 to 50.

— The method of capitalization for army retirees will be equated with that prevailing in the civil service. For example, a career army soldier will be able to capitalize up to 25 percent of his pension over six years, as is the case for civil servants.

— The program to replace the public's gas protection kits will be canceled.

— A total of 150 million shekels will be cut from the activities of the defense establishment. The specifics of this cut will be worked out by the establishment in the coming weeks.

At the same time, the Defense Ministry will receive a supplementary 630 million shekels in its 1997 budget, mainly to finance the retirement fund and the activities of the Army Rehabilitation Center, as well as research and development deals. As a result, the actual defense budget cut will be only 200 million shekels. [passage omitted]

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Israel: Attorney General Seeks To Prosecute SHAS Member in Fraud Cases

TA0807110996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The attorney general has advised the High Court that he plans to request that the Knesset lift the immunity of Refa'el Pinhasi, temporary chairman of the House Committee and a member of SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim], in order to put him on trial. He is a suspect in a series of financial fraud cases. In the previous term, the House Committee rejected the attorney general's request to enable the state to prosecute Pinhasi.

Our correspondent Esti Perez reports that tomorrow the High Court will hear the petitions against Pinhasi's appointment as chairman of the House Committee. The High Court ruled in the past that in view of the charges against him, he does not deserve to be a minister.

Israel: IDF Commander Says Troops Ready for Hebron Redeployment

TA0807074996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0405 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Major General Gabi Ofir, commander of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] troops in Judaea and Samaria, says the IDF is all set to implement any political echelon orders regarding redeployment in Hebron. Gen. Ofir added that the IDF will not allow a resumption of the intifadah in Hebron and will safeguard the security of the Jewish settlers. A message in this spirit has been relayed to the city's Arab leaders. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports on his conversation with Gen. Gabi Ofir:

[Begin recording] [Ben-Menahem] The security forces have detained about 800 suspects in Judaea and Samaria since the last wave of terrorist attacks in Israel. Most are suspected of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]-affiliated activities. The IDF has improved the method of spot checks at roadblocks, and it now inspects 2,500-4,000 vehicles at these roadblocks each day. Thanks to this method, the terrorist Hasan Salamah was captured in Hebron and 45 different weapons were seized at roadblocks over the past six months.

Gen. Gabi Ofir says that the total number of Molotov cocktails and stones thrown has declined and that the latest terrorist attacks were evidently carried out by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Islamic Jihad.

As for Hebron, Gen. Ofir says that reinforced IDF forces have been awaiting orders since March and will do everything necessary to safeguard the Jewish settlement of Hebron. I asked the general: Would you, as an IDF commander, prefer the entire city of Hebron to have Area B status, which would allow the IDF to retain overall responsibility for security?

[Ofir] The IDF will be prepared to carry out any order from the Government of Israel. We will be notified of the government policy and will translate it into security terms, just as we have always translated the policies of every Israeli Government since the establishment of the state.

[Ben-Menahem] Anxiety and tension are mounting among both the Arab and Jewish residents in anticipation of the redeployment. Radical elements in Fatah and Hamas have been trying to encourage the residents to renew the intifadah.

[Ofir] We will not allow a situation in which the Jews in Judaea and Samaria and the Jewish settlers of Hebron are unable to leave their homes to go to the Cave of the Patriarchs or to work.

[Ben-Menahem] Acting through the Civil Administration and other elements, the IDF explained to the Hebron mayor and elders that a resumption of the intifadah would harm the Arab residents and that they would do well to calm the raging tempers. [end recording]

Israel: Internal Security Minister on Hebron, Territories Closure

TA0607111596 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 0700 GMT 6 Jul 96

[Studio interview with Israeli Internal Security Minister Avigdor Qahalani by Menashe Raz; place not given; from the "Mishaq Hashabat" program — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Raz] We are hosting Internal Security Minister Avigdor Qahalani. Good morning and good Sabbath.

[Qahalani] Good morning and good Sabbath.

[Raz] Mr. Qahalani, is the government still studying the issue, or has it already adopted a decision on a redeployment in Hebron?

[Qahalani] The government is still discussing the issue. It seems that the general spirit is — the prime minister said so publicly at least — that he is going to accept the Oslo accords. As for me, I believe that the Oslo accords should be implemented....

[Raz, interrupting] Let me see if I understand you correctly. When Binyamin Netanyahu discusses the Hebron redeployment issue with U.S. President Clinton, will the President love the decision that Netanyahu will bring to him in Washington?

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[Qahalani] I do not know. The prime minister promised we would discuss the Hebron issue in the cabinet. It will arise in the cabinet....

[Raz, interrupting] When, though? He is traveling on 8 July, after all.

[Qahalani] Well, he will discuss it later, apparently. This is at least what was said in the cabinet itself.

[Raz] He is going to Washington without a decision then.

[Qahalani] He may be going to consult with Clinton. This is reasonable to assume. He may consult with him, they will make a joint decision, and then this will be brought to the cabinet for a decision. In any event, there are no decisions at the moment.

[Raz] When do you intend to close Orient House and halt the activity of the Palestinian Authority [PA] in Jerusalem?

[Qahalani] Why are you stating that Orient House should be closed down? What needs to be done....

[Raz, interrupting] That was the commitment of the majority in the government, at least.

[Qahalani] I can tell you the necessary steps in Jerusalem, in my opinion. We should prevent the PA, the Palestinian Council, from continuing to act in East Jerusalem, thus creating a de facto partition of Jerusalem into the eastern, Arab part, and the western, Jewish-Israeli part. This is what is happening in the area. This is a reality that is different from what we want and to which we should put an immediate stop. Therefore, I do not think it is Orient House as a building that interests us. It has become a symbol. We should stop the activity by the PA, by the Palestinian Council, in Jerusalem. We should find the way to make this clear to them, otherwise we will ultimately reach the building itself.

[Raz] Let us talk about a criterion of activity. If we talk of such a criterion, are you referring to a drastic decrease, upon government instructions, of activity at Orient House, totally unlike the situation under the previous government?

[Qahalani] The previous government spoke about the issue. The PA is active in the city, not only at Orient House. There are three other institutions engaged in one type of activity or another. The present government intends to stop all activity. In this regard, several points arise. For example, the PLO is active in Jerusalem — shall we stop it? The PLO is backed by the PA, so how should we treat this issue? The line to which the present government will adhere, in my opinion, is to halt unequivocally the activity of any body that works under PA aegis. The line on this is clear.

[Raz] Have you decided when to lift the closure from the territories, when to allow the Arabs of the territories to come to Israel for work?

[Qahalani] There was no decision. There is a recommendation, by the Defense Ministry, to ease the closure. It is difficult for me to live with this recommendation, but I accept it on the humanitarian level. There has been no decision up to this moment, but we should surely be favorable on this Palestinian issue. We should open the gates to workers of a certain age and up, with tight control over those who enter who should also not be allowed to sleep in Israel, so that we do not take too many risks. We should move in this direction. Goods already move through, the health issues are also all right, and we should meet the Palestinians halfway. As to exactly when this will take place, a decision has not been made.

[Raz] I am trying to put everything together now. Can there be a situation in which Prime Minister Netanyahu will say: I will redeploy the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] in Hebron, but at the same time, I will, for instance, form a territorial continuity between downtown Hebron and Qiryat Arba', or close Orient House. In other words, he will implement the redeployment accord, but will do other things simultaneously.

[Qahalani] I think that generally, the attempt to stick a label of extreme conduct on this government is not good, as far as its work is concerned and also physically — we think things over before making decisions! Forming a continuity between the Jewish Quarter, the Cave of the Patriarchs, and Qiryat Arba' is called for. Otherwise, how would Jews move around in all places there and reach their destination safely? I would not tie Qiryat Arba' to the Orient House issue. I told you, let us stop the activity of the Palestinian Council in Jerusalem, thus creating new facts there. The eastern part will be part of the city indeed. Let me give you an example. If kindergartens and playgrounds in East Jerusalem are exactly as they are in west Jerusalem — does it not show we are there? If police are more active in this area, this too points to our presence there. We need diverse actions that will connect the two parts of the city, so that we will have a single, whole city.

[Raz] You are talking about a continuity between downtown Hebron and Qiryat Arba' for the sake of Jewish settlement. Is this not a potential cause for inflaming moods in Hebron?

[Qahalani] It is not a continuity of Jewish settlement, but a continuity that allows the free passage of Jews to the Cave of the Patriarchs and the Jewish Quarter. I

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do not know what the decisions will be, but logically speaking, we should create a continuity so that Jews will be able to move between Qiryat Arba', the Cave of the Patriarchs, and the Jewish Quarter. Otherwise, they will have to cross borders and regimes, from a Palestinian to an Israeli regime, and this is not practical in the area, in my opinion. [passage omitted]

Israel: Security Source—'Arafat Using Hamas as 'Bargaining Chip'

TA0707060196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0405 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian Authority [PA] has started releasing Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad activists arrested after the wave of terrorist attacks in Israel. A senior Israeli security source believes 'Arafat wants to use Hamas as a bargaining chip in the negotiations on the permanent settlement. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports:

[Ben-Menahem] At the end of last week, the PA began releasing Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists arrested after the recent wave of terrorist attacks in Israel. The PA said they were released because no evidence was found against them, but a senior Palestinian security official told me that pressure is being applied on 'Arafat by the families of the detainees and PA council members.

A senior Israeli security official said that 'Arafat is interested in retaining Hamas as a bargaining chip in the negotiations with Israel on the permanent settlement. That is why 'Arafat is not taking any action to liquidate Hamas and its military infrastructure. Muhammad Dayf, Hamas' most-wanted terrorist, who is responsible for the worst terrorist attacks in Israel, is still living freely in Gaza. Terrorist Muhyi-al-Din al-Sharif, dubbed Engineer No. 2, as well as other wanted men, are living freely on the West Bank.

The senior Israeli official said Hamas is now waiting to see what sort of relations are formed between the PA and the new Israeli government. That is why Hamas is not resuming terrorist attacks at present since they could sabotage the redeployment in Hebron and annoy the PA. The source therefore believes that Hamas will wait until a crisis develops between Israel and the PA before renewing terrorist attacks. There is no intelligence information that Hamas has changed its modus operandi of suicide bombings, although there have recently been early warnings of plans to shoot and kidnap soldiers. The source believes 'Arafat will continue to use Hamas as a pawn in negotiating crises between the PA and Israel.

Israel: Dependence on U.S. Regarding Syria Believed Mistake

TA0607120296 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 5 Jul 96 p B5

[Commentary by Amir Oren: "The Main Channel"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Two years ago Netanyahu adviser Dore Gold made the Americans' calculation for them and explained why it is not worth their while, just as it is not worthwhile for the Israelis, "to grant the security necessary" for an agreement with Syria. This conclusion is typical of Netanyahu's close team, which, with its simplification and superficiality, astounds the officers, officials, and foreigners who try to maintain contacts with it, not always successfully. Frustration especially pervades the military establishment, which is forced to teach the prime minister and Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay Reality 101 and Theory and Practice of Defense.

The Foreign Ministry and foreign diplomats too have almost despaired of trying to decipher and/or enlighten Netanyahu. This also provides an opportunity for malicious joy: Ambassador Martin Indyk, who is known for his haughty attitude toward officials (unlike his predecessors, he refused to speak with heads of divisions in the Jerusalem Foreign Ministry) and who gambled on Yitzhaq Rabin exclusively — to the point of belittling Shim'on Peres and Netanyahu — is currently desperately looking for a trail of a thread leading to the new court officials in Netanyahu's palace. The fanfare on his Herzliyya lawn marking the 220th anniversary of U.S. independence may be misleading: The main channel in Jerusalem-Washington relations will go not through Indyk, nor through the successor of Itamar Rabinovich, but through David 'Ivri's National Defense Headquarters. [passage omitted]

The previous government, especially when Rabin was defense minister and Ehud Baraq the chief of staff, gambled that in the months between a deadlock in the political bargaining with Syria and the eruption of war, it will be the Americans who will fill the IDF's [Israel Defense Forces] absence. This readiness for such a fateful gamble is tantamount to the assumption that the scope of the political, economic, and defense aid of the last two decades will be perpetuated, and that presidents in Washington will continue to leave Israel alone on the nuclear issue. This assumption was based on the old equation of a peace-seeking Israel versus intransigent Arabs. If the situation is reversed and an intransigent Israel stands opposite Arabs who seek peace (in return for territories), all assumptions are void and Israel will not be at its best when it comes to war, the initial moves of which will determine its direction and cost. The overt Syrian goal, so threatens Syrian analyst 'Abd-al-Hayy Sayf, will be to exact as many Israeli victims as possible.

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Jordan: 'Arafat Arrives in al-'Aqabah; Official Views Talks

JN0607142496 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat arrived in the Jordanian city of al-'Aqabah this afternoon, accompanied by a number of Palestinian officials. Upon his arrival at the airport, his excellency was welcomed by King Husayn of Jordan and senior Jordanian officials. Presidency Secretary General al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim stressed the importance of the Palestinian-Jordanian summit in al-'Aqabah. He pointed out that during this summit the two sides will assess the situation and consolidate the distinguished Palestinian-Jordanian relations to come up with a joint vision that will enhance the Palestine question and the Palestinian people's right to achieve and exercise their national rights.

PLO Executive Committee member Dr. As'ad 'Abd-al-Rahman said that the Palestinian-Jordanian summit is a positive development on the Arab level, and that it will enhance the role of the Higher Palestinian-Jordanian Committee and its subcommittees on the basis of full coordination on various levels.

'Abd-al-Rahman, who arrived in Amman yesterday, described the Palestinian-Jordanian summit, which will be held today, as a positive and constructive sign in bilateral relations. He also said the summit is in harmony with the successive decisions made by the Palestine National Council. He added that these decisions call for special relations between the twins — the Palestinian and Jordanian peoples.

Jordan: 'Arafat Holds Talks With King Husayn

JN0607154296 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty King Husayn and His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the Palestinian National Authority, held a meeting at the Royal Palace in al-'Aqabah this afternoon. The meeting was attended by Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti and other senior officials from both sides. The meeting is part of the continued consultations and coordination between the two leaders.

The two leaders reviewed developments in the Middle East peace process and prospects for bilateral cooperation and coordination. They affirmed the need to pursue the peace process until a just and comprehensive peace is achieved — a peace to which the peoples of the region aspire and which paves the way for a better future for the coming generations.

His Majesty King Husayn emphasized the firm and principled Jordanian position that supports the Palestinian brothers to enable them to achieve their rights and establish their independent state on their national soil. His majesty also stressed the importance of commitment to what was agreed upon and building on what was achieved so that a just and comprehensive peace can prevail. His majesty the king and President 'Arafat agreed to continue consultations and coordination and to work to clear the Arab air and reactivate Arab solidarity to serve the nation's interests and key issues.

His Majesty King Husayn led those who saw off the Palestinian President at al-'Aqabah International Airport this afternoon. On hand also to see the president off were His Highness 'Abdallah Bin-al-Husayn, Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, His Highness Prince Talal Bin-Muhammad, the king's military secretary, Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir, the al-'Aqabah governor, the director of the Jordanian representation office in Gaza, the commander of the southern military region, the al-'Aqabah mayor, and other senior civic and military officials. The Palestinian ambassador in Amman and several Palestinian officials were also on hand to see off the president.

Jordan: 'Arafat, Husayn Meet To Discuss Peace Process

NC0607125596 Paris AFP in English 1153 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Al-'Aqabah, Jordan, July 6 (AFP) - Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat arrived at this Red Sea resort Saturday [6 July] and went straight into talks with Jordan's King Husayn on the Middle East peace process, officials said.

The two leaders were to "review the latest developments with regard to the peace process, notably the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations on the final status of the self-rule areas," initially slated to begin in June, a senior Jordanian official told AFP.

The official said "King Husayn and 'Arafat are to explore means leading to a speedy implementation of accords signed between the Palestinians and Israel, notably the Israeli pullout from Hebron," already three months behind schedule.

Hebron Mayor Mustafa al-Natshah warned Friday that the West Bank town was at a boiling point because of the Israeli government's delay in pulling out its troops.

On Thursday, Jordanian Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti said that King Husayn was to discuss with 'Arafat in al-'Aqabah "ways to support the Palestinian track" in the negotiations with Israel.

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Al-Kabariti called on Israel's new rightwing government to "declare its commitment to the peace accords and that it will pursue the peace process in good faith."

A Jordanian official at the al-'Aqabah meeting said that the rise to power in Israel of nationalist Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu "necessitates a deeper inter-Arab coordination, especially among the parties directly concerned in peace with Israel." [passage omitted]

Jordan: Al-Mu'ashshir on Husayn-'Arafat Meeting

JN0607193996 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti chaired a cabinet session this evening, during which the cabinet debated issues on the agenda and made several decisions. Following the session, Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir spoke to reporters.

[Begin recording] [al-Mu'ashshir] The cabinet devoted today's session to a report on privatization in Jordan, presented by the staff of the Planning Ministry. We debated this report at length. As you know, privatization in Jordan began some time ago. However, it has become necessary to create an institutional framework and general guidelines for this issue to introduce privatization into many government departments. The cabinet agreed to form a higher ministerial committee, led by the prime minister, and including several concerned ministers, to draw up general policies for privatization and to supervise its implementation. The cabinet also agreed to form a technical committee, or a technical unit, to implement the process of privatization. This unit will be headquartered at the Prime Ministry and will operate in coordination with the higher ministerial committee. This is what took place during the cabinet session today.

[Unidentified correspondent] Could you please brief us on the talks held in al-'Aqabah between His Majesty King Husayn and President 'Arafat?

[Al-Mu'ashshir] His majesty met today with His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat as part of regular meetings held with the Palestinian side for coordination and consultation on the peace process and to support the Palestinian negotiator in his negotiations on the final status. It was a very fruitful session, after which President 'Arafat left for Gaza. As I have said, there are regular meetings in this context.

[Correspondent] Was there agreement on specific mechanisms regarding coordination and consultation?

[Al-Mu'ashshir] Coordination is an ongoing process, and not linked to a specific visit. Therefore, we study all developments regularly to support the Palestinian side in their negotiations.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] tripartite, or four-way Egyptian-Jordanian-Palestinian-Israeli meeting?

[Al-Mu'ashshir] No date has been set for such a meeting. This is because we want such a meeting to be productive. It should be well prepared to achieve specific positive results. That is why a date for such a meeting has not been set yet.

[Correspondent] Dr. al-Mu'ashshir, the Muslim Brotherhood held a news conference today accusing the government of arresting Muslim brothers and of violating human rights. [words indistinct]

[Al-Mu'ashshir] The government does not violate human rights. All the arrests being made are carried out for security reasons and within the law. All those arrested have been arrested according to the law.

[Correspondent] Let us go back to President 'Arafat's visit to Jordan. There were press reports that the issue of Hamas [the Islamic Resistance movement] and its presence in Jordan was among the topics discussed during the closed session. How true is this? My second question is whether the Palestinian side ask Jordan to deliver a specific message to Netanyahu when he visits Jordan?

[Al-Mu'ashshir] The Jordanian and Palestinian sides consider the issue of Hamas as closed. The issue of Hamas was not raised during this session because matters in this respect are completely clear, and there is no need to discuss this issue further. However, permit me not to enter into the details of what took place at this meeting. I will just say that such meetings took place and will continue to take place to coordinate on the final-status negotiations.

[Correspondent] [words indistinct] yesterday and today invited Arab countries to hold an international conference on the issue of terrorism in the Middle East, or to follow up on it. Does Jordan have a stand on the adoption of a mechanism within the Arab framework to combat terrorism?

[Al-Mu'ashshir] As you know, Jordan has a very clear stand on terrorism. I believe there is an international concept adopted at the Sharm al-Shaykh conference that is a suitable platform which can be further developed. We support any Arab or international meeting that will adopt a suitable mechanism for combating terrorism and those who use it as a political instrument. [end recording]

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Jordan: Minister Views Relations, Coordination With PA

NC0807105996 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0510 GMT 8 Jul 96

[Telephone interview with Jordanian Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir, in Amman, by Fayiz al-Miliji in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Al-Miliji] Dr. al-Mu'ashshir, the visit by President 'Arafat and his discussions with His Majesty King Husayn come at a critical time for the negotiations between the Arabs and Israel, particularly on the Palestinian-Israeli track. Can you brief us on this visit and on the most important topics tackled by the two Arab leaders?

[Al-Mu'ashshir] The visit is in line with a series of meetings that started in Cairo under the auspices of President Mubarak with a meeting between the Jordanian and Palestinian sides to coordinate positions, particularly in the final phase of the Arab-Israeli conflict. There are new issues in the arena, especially since Netanyahu is going to the United States and afterward to Egypt and Jordan. That made us see that we should discuss the way to help the Palestinian brothers during the next round of negotiations.

[Al-Miliji] Have the Palestinians asked King Husayn to intervene officially or have there been any other specific requests to the king so that he can deliver them to the new Israeli prime minister, Netanyahu?

[Al-Mu'ashshir] There are always issues that require coordination between us and the Palestinians, and there are also discussions with the Israelis on these issues. We have always shown readiness to make the most of the credibility built after the Jordanian-Israeli agreement to benefit the Arabs and particularly the Palestinians. We intend to do that.

[Al-Miliji] Netanyahu will visit the United States, which is the basic sponsor of the Middle East peace process. Has President 'Arafat asked King Husayn to deliver any message to President Clinton?

[Al-Mu'ashshir] King Husayn visited Washington recently, before the Arab summit, during which an agreement was reached on the need to resume the peace process, taking as a term of reference the agreements by all the sides in Madrid, namely, the land-for-peace principle and UN Resolutions 242, 338, and 425. There was also an agreement in Washington on the need for Jordanian support for the Palestinians during the final stage of negotiations, but without Jordan being a substitute for the Palestinians and without participating in final-stage negotiations. We made this clear to the former Israeli Government and reiterated it to the new Likud government. The United States has the same opinion.

[Al-Miliji] Let us turn to Palestinian-Jordanian relations. What is being discussed regarding bilateral cooperation in light of the two leaders' meeting?

[Al-Mu'ashshir] The current period sees close cooperation between Jordan and the Palestinian Authority [PA], which will continue. You know there were some problems in the past, especially since the PA believed there was support for Hamas in Jordan. We made it clear that Jordan deals only with the PA and the PLO led by His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat. After that was cleared up, a strong coordination policy came into being, not only in the political sphere, but in the economic and security spheres as well.

[Al-Miliji] President Mubarak will visit Washington this month and will discuss the Middle East peace process. Can we anticipate a unified Arab position regarding the peace process, one that can seriously stand up to the Israeli stance on this?

[Al-Mu'ashshir] Much credit goes to President Mubarak for formulating the same Arab stance during the recent Arab summit; we have coordinated with fraternal Egypt on this. So we now have a clear Arab stance that asserts the commitment of all the Arab countries to the peace process on the basis of the Madrid conference, one that was agreed upon by all the parties. This is the first time that all the Arab states have committed themselves—through the Arab summit—to the outcome of the peace process, and what has been achieved thus far. We believe the Arab position is very clear now and hope that during President Mubarak's visit to Washington the United States will reaffirm the Madrid terms of reference and the peace process negotiations resume soon.

Jordan: Security Agencies Reportedly Arrest Hamas Member

JN0807092896 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 8 Jul 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] As part of a crack down on members of the Hamas [Islamic Resistance] Movement in Jordan, security agencies last week arrested Dr. Musa al-Aqtash, a current professor at Yarmuk University and former lecturer at al-Najah University. Dr. al-Aqtash was deported to Marj al-Zuhur in 1992 on the charge of belonging to the Hamas Movement. AL-MAJD learned that Dr. al-Aqtash's arrest angered deputies of the Islamic Action Front, who plan to step up their opposition to al-Kabariti's government because of its negative attitude toward the issue of bread and freedoms.

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The government released a number of Hamas members two weeks ago. The only one of them who remained in prison is 'Umar Abu-Sharkh. He is now joined by Dr. al-Aqtash, who was allowed to enter Jordan only a year and a half ago, despite the fact that he holds Jordanian nationality.

Jordan: Prime Minister Reportedly To Visit Syria 'Late July'

JN0607102196 Amman AL-URDUN in Arabic 6 Jul 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] It was learned from informed official sources that Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti will pay an official visit to Syria in late July.

It was also learned that this visit is aimed at finalizing a mechanism for an agreement on a host of issues so that it may be possible to arrange for a summit meeting between His Majesty King Husayn and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad later.

Jordan: France Cancels 325 Million Francs From Jordan's Debts

JN0607183296 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The finance minister announced the success of talks held between Jordanian and French sides in Paris last week to convert part of the debt Jordan owes to France into investments that will be employed in Jordan. The minister said the French side positively responded to Jordan's demands as it agreed to cancel 325 million French Francs after a sizable discount rate was obtained under the program of converting the debt into investments in projects in Jordan. This arrangement is in implementation of Jordan's agreement with Paris Club members to reduce Jordan's foreign debt, one of the fruits of Jordan's economic readjustment program.

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Lebanon: Buwayz Skeptical Monitoring Committee Will Be Formed

NC0607161896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1530 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has ruled out the setting up of the monitoring committee provided for in the April understanding.

In remarks to the press, Buwayz said: With the indefinite interruption of the peace process and the inflammatory remarks we get from the Israeli Government, I doubt that the monitoring committee will see the light of day. He pointed out, however, that Lebanon will try all the methods and respond to any proposal that might lead to the formation of this committee.

Asked about reports about a proposed Israeli withdrawal from the south, Buwayz said: What is proposed are partial and booby-trapped withdrawals that can trigger clashes in the south.

Calling for unity in the Arab ranks, Buwayz said that the mediations Syria is undertaking fall in this context.

Lebanon: Fadlallah Lauds Syrian Efforts Between Iran, Arab World

NC0507182296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Allamah Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah has praised Syrian efforts to normalize ties between Iran and the Arab world. He said these efforts serve Islam and the Arabs, particularly at this sensitive stage. In his Friday sermon at a mosque in Beirut's Southern Suburb today, he said Iran is doing everything it can to defend the Islamic causes, particularly the Palestinian issue. He noted the need for cooperation between Iran and Egypt to confront the major challenges ahead. He denounced the U.S. presence in the Persian Gulf, stressing that the Persian Gulf littoral countries alone have the right to defend their interests in this region. He pointed out that Iran seeks to achieve this goal.

Lebanon: Hizballah Reportedly Claims 6 Jul Attack on Israeli Patrol

JN0707072896 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0700 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In Beirut today, Hizballah claimed responsibility for last night's attack on an Israeli patrol in the area occupied by Israel in southern Lebanon in which two Israeli soldiers were wounded, as announced by the South Lebanese Army militia that is affiliated with Israel. In Jerusalem, Israeli military sources confirmed that two soldiers were wounded, but did not specify the group which carried out the military operation in southern Lebanon.

Lebanon: Al-Khubar Bombing Said 'To Punish' Saudis Not U.S.

NC0707085596 Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic 1 Jul 96 pp 6-7

[Editorial: "Aggression Against Saudi Arabia Is Aggression Against Arabs and Muslims"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Arab summit in Cairo, in which Saudi Arabia played a leading and outstanding role, and the crime against the kingdom's security with the bombing of an American military center at al-Khubar, were only a few days apart.

The message appears to be clear—namely, to punish Saudi Arabia for its role in securing Arab solidarity and drawing up a harmonious Arab policy to confront current and future challenges.

For those who say the attack targeted U.S. interests in Saudi Arabia, the answer is simple: Those who want to hurt the United States can reach it anywhere the world. Why attack it only in Saudi Arabia? Does this not mean that the attack was directed at the Kingdom's security, rational policy, and wise leadership?

And why after the Arab summit? It is common knowledge that the summit would not have been possible had it not been for the efforts of Saudi Arabia, led by King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the custodian of the two holy mosques, and his honest Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz. The summit sought to serve Arab interests. The enemies of this nation had gambled that the summit would not be held, and if held would not succeed. But the summit was a success by any standard.

If the summit had failed, would the aggression still have taken place? Was the bombing a reaction to the summit's success and the Kingdom's role in it?

Observers of Washington's relations with some of the Islamic groups that came under the U.S. wing in Afghanistan on the pretext of fighting the Soviet Union — and the United States entered the camps of those groups and wrote reports on every piece of information wanted by the CIA — say that those who let the genie out of the bottle must bear the responsibility for their actions. If it is said that the Islamists carried out the attack, then the United States is responsible for this. And if a group using religion for cover wanted to carry out operations on such a big scale against a U.S. interest, then something known only to the Americans and the perpetrators must have happened for the confrontation to reach such a level.

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We say let any Islamic group or state fight the United States, and let the two sides use whatever methods they want in this struggle. And let the whole world be the arena for this confrontation, but not Saudi Arabia, the land of holy places, the land of stability, and the land of security, may God protect it.

Lebanon: Israeli Forces Release 2 Kidnaped Fishermen

NC0507113896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1100 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Last night the Israeli occupation forces kidnapped two fishermen in a commando operation near the al-Hamra'-al-Mansuri area and led them to inside the occupied border strip. A short while ago, the occupation forces released them on the al-Hamra' crossing point, from where they set out to their home in Buyut al-Sayyid.

Lebanon: Al-Hariri Returns From France

NC0507131696 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1300 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri returned to Beirut from Paris at 1530 [1230 GMT] today following a short visit to France during which he met with President Jacques Chirac. [passage omitted]

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Syria: Al-Asad, French President Discuss Peace Process on Phone

JN0507173896 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1515 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad received a telephone call from French President Jacques Chirac today. They discussed the situation and developments in the region. President Chirac asserted the importance of continuing the peace process, and that Europe continues to believe in the peace process and the need to achieve its objectives. President Chirac added that the delegations that took part in the G-7 meeting in Lyon, France also adhere to the peace process, the foundations on which it was launched, and its projected goal.

His excellency the president said that Syria adheres to the peace process according to the foundations from which it proceeded, which are based on the Security Council resolutions and the land-for-peace principle, because this process is the only way to achieve peace in the region.

His excellency the president thanked France, the EU, and the countries that took part in the G-7 summit for their positive stand on the peace process in the region and for their eagerness to achieve peace, which is the sublime goal of the peoples of the world.

The two presidents also discussed bilateral relations, and it was agreed that contacts and visits between the two sides will continue.

Syria: Al-Ahmar Discusses Peace Process, Israeli 'Obstacles'

JN0607203196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1815 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Comrades 'Abdallah al-Ahmar, assistant secretary general of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, and Dr. 'Abd-al-Razzaq Ayyub, member of the Ba'th Party Regional Command and head of the Regional Education Bureau and of the Regional Vanguards Bureau, met with students of the martyr Staff Major Engineer Paratrooper Basil al-Asad's camp for university military training in al-Dimas this evening. [passage omitted]

Comrade al-Ahmar stressed the constants of the Syrian Arab position on the peace process—a position which is now a pan-Arab position that was embodied at the Arab summit held in Cairo. This position is based on international legitimacy and on implementing its resolutions as well as on the principle of exchanging land for peace, he added.

Al-Ahmar pointed out that while peace is the Arabs' strategic option, it must also be Israel's strategic option. This requires Israel to express its commitment to a just and comprehensive peace in accordance with the bases specified at the Madrid conference, to remove the obstacles it places in the way of the peace process, and to announce its commitment to the bases of this process. These bases require that Israel not occupy others' territories by force, he said.

He added that the starting point to establish the sought just and comprehensive peace, in accordance with these bases, is Israel's withdrawal from the Golan to the 4 June 1967 lines and from southern Lebanon, the western al-Biqa', and the occupied Palestinian territories.

Al-Ahmar said: Moreover, Israel should stop the building of settlements, show readiness to dismantle the settlements built in the occupied territories, and recognize the Palestinian Arab people's right to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent state.

He added that Israel is the party that deadlocked the peace process. Israel is also evading its commitments and all the requirements of peace. It also continued its intransigence and measures which conflict with peace. These measures are represented by its recent savage aggression against Lebanon, he added.

Al-Ahmar pointed out that the policy of the new Israeli Government is hostile to a just and comprehensive peace, and that the security it is insisting on can only be provided through peace. He added that the security of all in the region must be reciprocal and equitable because no party can have security at the expense of the security, rights, and interests of other parties.

He continued: The international community adheres to the peace process and its bases, as was shown by the decisions of the Arab summit held in Cairo, by the EU summit in Florence, and by the summit of the seven industrialized states held in Lyon, France.

Comrade al-Ahmar said: Despite all developments and campaigns launched against it, Syria has self-confidence, believes in its rights and adheres to them, and sticks to the ability of the Arab nation and its solidarity with Syria in order to regain the land and rights. Syria was not dragged into the provocations made by those who wanted to provoke it. No party can blackmail Syria through pressure or through suspect and unfounded campaigns, he noted.

He added: Syria wants security and peace in the region. Syria is extending its hand to anyone who will work with it to build peace that will provide security, stability, and prosperity for the region. Syria is also working to revive joint Arab action to confront challenges and

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obstacles impeding our Arab nation's endeavors to establish a just and comprehensive peace which will bring prosperity, stability, and security to the region, he said. [passage omitted]

Syria: Paper Commends Successful Outcome of Bahrain-Iran Mediation

JN0607065996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0450 GMT 6 Jul 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial today, under the headline: "The Summit Resolutions and Syrian Political Moves," AL-THAWRAH addresses the active Syrian political moves aimed at rehabilitating Arab solidarity and laying strong foundations for joint Arab action to tackle an imminent danger that would spare nobody. The paper underlines the exceptional importance of the favorable response with which leader al-Asad's initiative to mediate the dispute between Bahrain and Iran was met, hoping that similar successes will ensue so that all disputes and differences in the pan-Arab fold may be resolved and so that all feuds and abnormal situations plaguing ties between Arabs and Muslims may be remedied.

AL-THAWRAH adds: Common interests as well as historical and cultural ties require joint moves against a common enemy, Israel, which is an enemy of all Arabs and Muslims. It is unreasonable for us to confront this enemy with marginal conflicts and uncalled-for frictions. It is unreasonable for the current situation between the Arabs and their friends and neighbors to remain unaddressed, especially since Israel is using this to its advantage. It is using this to deal with us one at a time.

AL-THAWRAH goes on to say: We all are looking with admiration to great leader Hafiz al-Asad, who continues his pan-Arab moves to forge the best of inter-Arab ties. Who else could accomplish this great and grave mission, which would bring about joint Arab action in implementation of the Cairo summit resolutions to face up to the challenges of the upcoming phase ushered in by the assumption of power by Netanyahu in Israel, particularly since he is held in high esteem by Arabs and Muslims?

AL-THAWRAH says: All Arab and Islamic resources must be pooled to face up to the Israeli intransigence. Israel is rejecting all international conventions and international legitimacy. It is rejecting all kinds of peace with Arabs, except the peace of humiliation and submission Netanyahu has clearly advocated. The participants in the Arab summit warned Israel against the consequences of rejecting peace or reneging on its commitments to peace. Given this development, the Arabs must prepare themselves and reorganize their ties by pooling all their resources to confront this Israeli rejection of peace, and this defiance by Netanyahu.

Concluding its editorial, AL-THAWRAH says: This is impossible to achieve without closing ranks, building Arab solidarity, extending bridges of trust with the regional and Islamic countries surrounding the Arab homeland, and rearranging the priorities of joint action to foster a forceful solidarity that would epitomize the Arab summit resolutions so that this summit may prove its worth in the contemporary Arab history.

Syria: Press Urges U.S. To 'Correct' Netanyahu Peace Concepts

JN0707091196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0450 GMT 7 Jul 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial today, TISHRIN speaks about the new Israeli Government's exposed maneuvers aimed at evading the requirements of just peace before Prime Minister Netanyahu leaves for Washington to meet with U.S. President Bill Clinton. The paper says that Netanyahu alleged that he wants to resume talks with the Arabs without Arab preconditions, but with his preconditions represented by his rejection of withdrawal from the Golan, Jerusalem, the West Bank, and southern Lebanon.

TISHRIN says: Netanyahu's ideas surprised not only regional countries, but also world countries, which expressed dismay and voiced commitment to the principles of the peace process which formed the basis of the Madrid conference. This means the relevant Security Council resolutions and the land-for-peace principle.

The paper says: At the Florence summit, the European Union expressed its commitment to the principles of the peace process, and urged Netanyahu's government to abide by these principles. The seven industrialized nations also urged the Israeli Government not to renege on its commitments and agreements. In a telephone contact with President Hafiz al-Asad yesterday, French President Jacques Chirac emphasized that Europe strongly supports the peace process in accordance with the principles on which it was launched, and its set objectives.

The newspaper says: Netanyahu's statements against Syria drew adverse reactions from all Arab and international circles and from Israel itself. The Cairo summit, which comprised all the Arabs, supported Syria and its legitimate right to restore the Golan. Influential countries within the international community, including the

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United States, reiterated their commitment to the land-for-peace principle, and viewed Netanyahu's fierce campaign against Syria as an exposed cover for its plan to maintain its occupation of the Golan.

TISHRIN concludes by emphasizing that Netanyahu's lies and provocations will never affect Syria's position. Syria adheres to the peace process in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy, and will not relinquish an iota of soil or any of its rights. The charges of sponsoring terrorism must be directed toward Israel.

In its editorial today, AL-BA'TH newspaper discusses the serious stalemate affecting the Middle East peace process as a result of the policy of the Israeli Government led by Binyamin Netanyahu.

AL-BA'TH says: Netanyahu will leave on a visit to Washington amid the incitement campaigns he is launching against Syria and Lebanon. The only thing he is carrying with him is a retraction of the Madrid formula and an attempt to convince the U.S. Administration of a new terms of reference based on peace for peace, which is completely opposite to the principle on which the peace process was based; namely, land for peace.

The paper adds: The U.S. Administration stressed its commitment to the principles and bases of the peace process and, on the eve of Netanyahu's visit to the White House, the picture is clear both regionally and internationally. The world is aware that Israel's retraction of the peace process places this process at a serious stalemate.

AL-BA'TH adds that positions are clear regarding the closing of Arab ranks, reviving solidarity, and bolstering relations among the countries of the region. This constitutes a strong shield in the face of Netanyahu's attempts to restore the war atmosphere.

AL-BA'TH concludes: The strong shield which serves the nation's interests was built by the efforts and positions of leader al-Asad who defends Arab rights, and is the first protector of legitimate rights.

Commenting on the same subject, AL-THAWRAH says: The call for unconditional resumption of negotiations is like a call for torpedoing the principles of peace, its terms of reference, and its commitments represented by the efforts made by the cosponsors of the peace process. This is the most serious condition set by Netanyahu's government which adopted elastic concepts about security which it wants to combine with land and peace at the expense of the Arabs' land, rights, and dignity.

It adds: Adherence to the terms of reference adopted since the Madrid conference is not a precondition. The absurd Israeli argument on this issue can never conceal Israel's responsibility for attempting to kill the peace opportunity and push the region toward tension and confrontations that serve the objectives of the extremist trend in Israel. This trend's ideas were an election platform that turned into a government program and a policy seeking escalation and the planting of mines along the road of peace. Peace is now at a crossroads and is threatened with collapse unless the U.S. Administration quickly and strongly moves to correct Netanyahu's peace concepts and make him commit himself to the peace principles and terms of reference.

AL-THAWRAH concludes: Anyhow, Netanyahu's presence in Washington is a chance for Washington to emphasize its commitment to the peace process in accordance with international legitimacy and the land-for-peace principle, as the whole international community did, and to act on the basis of this commitment so that it will be possible to speak about activating peace and advancing it toward the aspired objective.

Syria: AL-BA'TH Comments on Netanyahu's U.S. Visit

JN0807064196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0450 GMT 8 Jul 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-BA'TH comments on Israel's hard-line attitude toward the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the region. Under the headline "Israel's Positions Seek To Destroy Peace Process," AL-BA'TH says: Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, who will visit the United States today, adopted a series of stands which can be summed up in the fact that Israel no longer recognizes the Madrid terms of reference, on whose basis the peace process was launched. In fact, Israel is working to destroy these terms.

The newspaper adds: It has become clear that instead of announcing its commitment to the peace process, Tel Aviv is working to increase tension in the region by refusing to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories and by pursuing its settlement policy. This confirms that Israel does not seek peace as much as it seeks a policy of aggression and expansion.

AL-BA'TH points out that this policy contradicts the international emphasis on the need to save the peace process. Although the U.S. Administration has continued to stress that real peace in the region can only

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be achieved by implementing the land-for-peace principle, it would be useful if the U.S. Administration officially informs Netanyahu that rejecting the principles and foundations of the peace process not only means Israel's abandonment of the peace process but also the destruction of it.

The newspaper hopes that the U.S. Administration will confirm its credibility by firmly adhering to the Madrid formula, because it remains the basis of any progress toward a just and comprehensive peace. We in Syria call for serious action to put the peace process back on track through adherence to the principles and foundations of this process. The newspaper points out that the U.S. Administration says, like others, that there will be dire consequences if no real peace is achieved in the region.

AL-BA'TH concludes: We advocate a peace that restores the occupied land. We will continue to reject any peace that does not restore rights in full. The Arabs' asking for their rights is not a precondition, as Netanyahu claims. The Israeli leadership should be aware that these Arab rights are fixed now and in the future. The stands of Netanyahu and others will not alter established facts.

Syria: Radio Says Future Talks With Israel Must Focus on Golan

JN0507183696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1140 GMT 5 Jul 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: On 9 July, U.S. President Bill Clinton will discuss with Israel's prime minister the future of the Middle East peace process and — as stated by the White House — is expecting clear answers as to the extent of Israel's commitment to the bases of the peace process, especially the land-for-peace principle. With the approach of this date, Israel's Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu invited Syria to hold talks at the highest level. He said that he has a lot of issues in mind that should be discussed, chief of which are security issues. However, Netanyahu did not mention anything at all about Israeli withdrawal from the Golan and did not show any willingness to discuss this issue, which is Syria's preoccupation. Indeed, in previous statements, he strongly denied the possibility of any withdrawal under the pretext of the Golan's importance to Israel's alleged security.

Netanyahu claimed that the Madrid conference was not based on the land-for-peace principle, notwithstanding that this principle is the essence of the U.S. initiative, which led to the convocation of the Madrid conference. Moreover, the conference was based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 that do not at all allow the occupation of other people's land by military force and urge Israel to withdraw from all the territories it occupied in 1967.

It is clear to any observer that Israel is facing a very critical situation and that it lacks a margin for maneuvering and prevarication. Netanyahu's stands during the elections campaign and his government program that includes these stands aroused the fears of the entire international community. It is illogical for the international community to allow years of efforts to be undermined. These efforts led to some tangible steps toward realizing peace in the Middle East. The United States cannot remain silent while its Israeli ally is killing its peace initiative and undermining its credibility and reputation.

It is not a coincidence that in its final communique, the European summit in Florence stressed the bases of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East and called on Israel to commit itself to them and live up to its own pledges. Moreover, the G-7 states and Russia sent out a frank call to continue the peace process according to the bases of the Madrid conference. President Clinton said that he expects Israel to live up to its commitments.

All these stands clearly show that not a single member of the international community was deceived for a moment by the misleading proposals of Netanyahu's government, especially his aggressive campaign against Syria, and accusing it of terrorism.

Syria is a basic pillar of the peace process. Indeed, there can be no peace in the region without its participation. When Syria, in coordination with Egypt and Saudi Arabia called for an Arab summit, all the Arab brothers responded to the call, showed solidarity with its stand, and urged Israel to fully withdraw from the Golan, southern Lebanon, Jerusalem, and the West Bank. They also threatened to reconsider all their policies if Israel continues its deception and intransigence.

Syria's role went beyond the Arab dimension to include the Islamic dimension as well. Damascus succeeded in removing the misunderstanding between Iran and Bahrain. The same effort was continued toward removing the misunderstanding between Iran and some other Arab countries. At the same time, Damascus is seeking to extend bridges of friendship and cooperation with Erbakan's new government in Turkey.

We say this to show that Netanyahu's statements and fabrications against Syria do not at all undermine Syria's prestige in the Arab and Islamic worlds and in the international arena, but they do reflect negatively on Israel and the peace process. All international observers interpreted all these statements as an exposed maneuver to cover up Netanyahu's determination not to withdraw

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from the Golan and not to implement resolutions of international legitimacy in this regard.

Syria is truly and responsibly concerned about achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the entire region based on international resolutions and the land-for-peace principle. It is first and foremost concerned about discussing Israel's full withdrawal from the Golan to the 4 June 1967 lines. All future talks with Israel — if it was possible to organize such talks — will basically focus on a full Israeli withdrawal and establishing equitable [mutakafi'] security.

If Netanyahu is under the illusion for one moment that it is possible hold talks with Syria that do not focus on a full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan, he is making a big mistake. Syria will not bargain and will not relinquish any of its rights. If Israeli intransigence continues, it will not yield any results, but will only put Israel in confrontation with the international community and the entire Arab world. This is because the security pretexts, which the Tel Aviv officials always trade with, have become a rejected and exposed commodity. There can be no security outside the framework of a just peace.

Syria: TISHRIN Terms Netanyahu Statements 'Trick' To Evade Peace

JN0607101696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0450 GMT 6 Jul 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial today, the newspaper TISHRIN addresses the statements made by Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu regarding the peace process, saying: Any statements by Netanyahu regarding his desire for peace remain deceptive as long as he does not articulate a commitment to the requirements of peace. They are aimed to put the peace process on hold or pounce on it to bring about its demise.

TISHRIN adds: The alleged security pretexts Netanyahu is trying to promote and peddle are merely a trick he is using to evade the requirements of peace and kill the peace process. This is because these pretexts have nothing to do with peace. Peace alone can bring security. We should not circumvent the real requirements of peace by the use of security pretexts.

TISHRIN goes on to say: Peace leads to security, because peace would end occupation and result in the implementation of the relevant international legitimacy resolutions. Occupation is the problem Israel is trying to circumvent. It is occupation that has placed the region in a state of turbulence, heightened tension, and violence. When Israel effects complete withdrawal from the occupied territories, peace will automatically ensue.

TISHRIN says: Syria abides by the will of the international community, which spelled out the way to achieve a just, comprehensive, and genuine peace when it deemed inadmissible the acquisition of others' territory by force or war.

Concluding, TISHRIN says: Undoubtedly, when he demands the revocation of the principles agreed to in the Madrid formula, Netanyahu calls for the continued control of the occupied Arab territories, which is in stark contrast to the components and requirements of a just and comprehensive peace. Netanyahu is championing an unacceptable and condemnable formula; namely, the peace-for-peace formula. Additionally, Netanyahu cannot consider Lebanese national resistance groups as terrorists at a time when Israel continues to occupy southern Lebanon. This is because international laws and conventions uphold the rights of resistance groups to resist occupation and occupiers.

Syria: Radio Criticizes Netanyahu's 'Peace-for-Peace Fantasy'

JN0607165896 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1135 GMT 6 Jul 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli prime minister is mistaken if he believes he can overlook the principles of just and comprehensive peace as adopted by the international community. The prime minister's attempts to use terrorism as a pretext to implement policies that conflict with the requirements of just peace have now become exposed and they are rejected by all those who are eager to realize security and stability for the peoples of the region. In embarking on such attempts, Netanyahu moves away from achieving stability in the region.

While it has become clear where the Likud's policy is heading — to deal a blow to the peace process, ignore its bases, and disregard its terms of reference — the Israeli officials launch a fierce media campaign in collaboration with the Zionist lobby in the United States and the Zionist mass media and those within their orbit to instigate others against Syria, demanding that it be surrounded under the pretext that Syria sponsors terrorism. This is one of the ways Israel tries to evade peace and its requirements, in implementation of the Likud election program and Netanyahu's government policy. The Israeli Government policy began by uttering a bunch of no's that make the realization of a just peace an impossibility, particularly since Netanyahu has not made any mention of Israeli withdrawals. He proposes many impossible terms for negotiating on the basis of the peace-for-peace fantasy.

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When Netanyahu states his peace perspective, he refers to bilateral cooperation agreements which do not include withdrawal from the Golan. He crowns his statements by saying that Syria will benefit from what he calls dropping its name from the terrorism list. This shows why Israel insists on using all possible means to accuse Syria of sponsoring so-called terrorism. Whether deliberately or not, Israel forgets that Syria was among the first to call for an international conference to define the concept of terrorism and to make a distinction between terrorism and the legitimate resistance of occupation.

Syria is not in the least concerned with the list of states sponsoring terrorism which Israel is talking about. Netanyahu is drowning in a sea of illusions that bedims his path. He flounders even in replying to the Arab statements about peace as spelled out at the Arab summit, which stressed that the Arabs seek just and comprehensive peace and adhere to this peace as a strategic option in accordance with the Security Council resolutions and the Madrid conference as terms of reference.

The Arab summit adopted the same position adopted by the major industrialized states along with Russia and the European summit, demonstrating an eagerness to stick to the Madrid conference and the land-for-peace formula as terms of reference.

Netanyahu tries to measure the issue of peace in accordance with his special yardsticks to appease the extremist right wing in Israel, which embodies the religious Israeli right wing with their Torah beliefs.

Syria is not concerned with the Likud policy statement, and it is not prepared to relinquish its land or its national and pan-Arab rights just to please the Jewish extremists. While adhering to just and comprehensive peace, Syria agrees with the international community and its influential forces on the principle of peace as expressed in the land-for-peace formula. If Netanyahu believes that he can achieve peace without full withdrawal from the Golan to the 4 June 1967 lines, from southern Lebanon, and from the occupied Arab lands, including Jerusalem, then he will be ignoring the resolutions of international legitimacy and those of the international community with all its institutions. Consequently, he will be deliberately placing obstacles, killing the bases of peace, and destroying its terms of reference. Moreover, he will be searching for a new method to control the game of mixing up the cards by putting pressure on Syria—a method which past events have shown to be wrong and dangerous.

The entire world, including the two sponsors of the peace process, insists that there will be no peace without Syria, and that there will be no peace unless the restoration of the land to its rightful owners and everybody's rights and security are guaranteed. These should be guaranteed on the basis of equality and all parties' compliance with international law and UN resolutions. Complying with these resolutions means achieving a just and durable peace as well as the elimination of all that causes tension, violence, and wars in the region.

Syria: AL-THAWRAH Says Israel's Rulers Cannot Set 'Clock Back'

JN0707094996 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0725 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 7 Jul (SANA) — The newspaper AL-THAWRAH says that Israel's rulers will be mistaken if they believe that they can put the clock back or impose peace according to their concepts, conditions, and priorities, which they frequently used as pretexts for aggression and expansion at the expense of the Arabs' security, land, and dignity.

In a commentary, the paper goes on to say: If anybody in the new Israeli Government believes that the logic of terrorism, intimidation, and blackmail through force, military superiority, and nuclear weapons — which are supposed to be restricted to the Zionist military establishment away from any Arab deterrence — can prevail in the region, consecrate the fait accompli policy, and usurp a single national right of the Arabs, then he is wrong.

It adds: Netanyahu should sooner or later determine his final position on peace. We do not think he can continue to defy the world and the principles and resolutions of international legitimacy regardless of the extent of his intransigence, arrogance, and rejection of the foundations of peace. Notwithstanding the size of support, Washington's position seems to be much more biased toward and harmonious with the Israeli policy as the U.S. presidential elections draw closer. At the same time, this position is less enthusiastic about asserting credibility, translating the well-known U.S. peace initiative, and fulfilling its commitments and pledges regarding the peace process.

The paper says: Israel has nothing to offer at the negotiating table. Its new rulers believe that they are free from the obligations and terms of reference of the peace settlement. They are not concerned about returning rights to their owners. This position puts the Arab and the world before two options only: Either submission to Israel's will and ambitions or war and military confrontation in the region.

Concluding its commentary, AL-THAWRAH says: Syria asserted and still assets its commitment to peace. Any other talk is worthless, meaningless, and does not concern us. We will not accept anything that contradicts our principles, stands, and national and pan-Arab constants.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: New Prime Minister Pledges Unity as Cabinet Sworn In

BK0607140096 Hong Kong AFP in English 1346 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KABUL, July 6 (AFP) — Afghanistan's new premier Golboddin Hekmatyar on Saturday [6 July] pledged that his unlikely new coalition government would remain united and avoid the bloody mistakes of the past.

Hekmatyar, speaking after the first six ministers in his new government were sworn in at a ceremony here, promised that he and his former enemies would work together to reunite the fragmented country.

"We are determined and resolved to preserve this unity that we have created," the prime minister said in his first public appearance since taking office 10 days ago.

"The bitterness of the past will not be repeated and nobody will hear any more news on dischord and disunity in this government," he said in a speech at Kabul's presidential palace.

Hekmatyar, who in 1994 launched a massive and bloody coup attempt against the government of President Borhanoddin Rabbani, rejoined his former enemies in Kabul last week under a landmark pact signed between the two parties in May.

More than 45,000 Kabulis died in the months of fighting triggered by the coup, which eventually saw Hekmatyar and his then ally northern warlord General 'Abdol Rashid Dostum pushed from the Kabul area.

The surprise accord appears to have sent many of the country's warring factions into disarray and prompted them to discuss joining the once weakened and beleaguered Kabul government, analysts said.

Hekmatyar, in a fiery speech, also called on the Taleban militia besieging Kabul to stop fighting and to consider peace talks with the government.

"Our message to the Taleban is to fear God and not to stain their hands with the blood of the innocent people of Kabul," he said just three hours after eight civilians were killed and 26 wounded in a Taleban shell attack on the besieged Afghan capital.

"We are prepared to consider any legitimate demand from them," he said. "If they are not inclined to join the peace process at this stage, they should wait and see if we can create a true Islamic government."

"The results of our ongoing talks with other groups are promising," he added referring to negotiations between two major opposition parties who have expressed interest in joining the Kabul administration.

The former mojahedin fighter, who along with Rabbani and his top military commander Ahmad Shah Mas'ud helped oust Soviet forces from the country seven years ago, praised the president and Mas'ud for their roles in bringing him into the government.

He dismissed rumours that a split had already developed in the new government over the proposed cabinet line-up, describing it as "baseless propaganda."

Only six out of a full complement of 26 ministers in the coalition alliance were sworn in, despite nine portfolios being announced by Rabbani on Wednesday. [3 July] The other three candidates were sick or overseas on mission, Hekmatyar said.

The only key posts to be filled Saturday were the defence ministry — by Wahidollah Sabaw'un, intelligence chief of Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami group — and the finance and education ministries, analysts noted.

Another top Hezb official, 'Abdol Hadi Arghandiwal, was sworn in as finance minister under the terms of the May 24 power-sharing pact, while Ahmad Shah Ahmadzai, the former caretaker prime minister, officially became the country's new education minister.

Mohammad Yunes Qanuni, who was due to be sworn in as interior minister, was however not present at the ceremony attended by the president and premier as he was overseas to receive medical treatment.

Hekmatyar told the 50 guests at the ceremony that other ministerial posts would be left vacant under the charge of caretaker ministers in case other opposition groups decided to join the government.

"Any change is possible in this government for the creation of peace and if it attracts other opposition parties," he said adding that the ministers would remain on in a caretaker capacity until the full cabinet was decided.

The premier lambasted the tiny foreign press corps here for "analysing instead of reporting" events in the country characterised by an extremely complex political merry-go-round.

Afghanistan: Hekmatyar Briefs Reporters on New Government

LD0607204796 Tehran IRNA in English 2026 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, July 6, IRNA — Following the swearing-in of the Afghan prime minister, Golboddin Hekmatyar and the oath taking ceremony of

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the members of his cabinet, the new Afghan government will officially start functioning as of Sunday [7 July] morning.

The Afghan prime minister told foreign and domestic reporters that his cabinet is responsible for putting an end to the war, securing peace, stability and security across the nation, eliminating economic, social and political problems of the people, absorbing all the jihadi and independence-seeking forces and holding of election for establishment of an elected Islamic government.

Hekmatyar added that his government will also concentrate all their energy to motivate the war mongers to opt for a dialog to resolve the differences and accept peace terms, to foil the domestic and foreign plots aimed at dividing Afghanistan, and to pave the way for establishment of a powerful central government.

The Afghan prime minister refuted that there existed any differences between the parties and personalities in the newly formed government, adding that certain western propaganda media apparatus which are not content with the consolidation of the newly formed Islamic government in that country air such rumors.

Hekmatyar anticipated that many jihadi groups would join the newly formed government in the coming days, which will in turn further strengthen peace in the country. He added that never will the past bitter experiences be repeated and that there will be no chance for creation of disparities.

Hekmatyar described the present interim government as the backbone for the establishment of an elected Islamic government in Afghanistan, adding that all attention will be focused on holding elections in order to bring an elected government to power. He called on Taleban to stop shelling Kabul and killing the innocent civilians, advising them to seek peaceful means for meeting their demands. The prime minister warned Taleban saying that if they are not ready to sit at negotiating table, they should wait for the materialization of Islamic ideals and then join in. He stressed that foreign meddling is responsible for the persistance of the crisis and existing differences in Afghanistan, pointing out that through unity and solidarity of the combatants never will the plots of foreigners materialize.

Hekmatyar noted that the Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity Party] faces no complications with the government, but that the members of the party have not yet arrived at final decision for accepting the post of agriculture minister.

Afghanistan: New Prime Minister Warns Taleban of 'Counterattack'

BK0807102096 Hong Kong AFP in English 1007 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KABUL, July 8 (AFP) — Afghanistan's new premier, Golboddin Hekmatyar, has issued a stern warning to the Taleban besieging Kabul telling his cabinet government troops would soon counterattack, officials said Monday. [8 July]

Chairing his first cabinet meeting since taking office, Hekmatyar told defence ministry officials at Sunday's [7 July] cabinet session that the bloody siege of Kabul could not continue and that government forces would soon strike at the militiamen in the southern province of Logar.

"Rockets are indiscrimately hitting Kabul and it's crucial for the people that an end should be put to this situation," he told officials of the ministry which his intelligence chief Wahidullah Sabaw'un now runs.

"Only the mojahedin of Logar will be able to push the Taleban out but we should help the people of Logar attain the freedom of their province," he told the defence cadres according to Kabul Radio.

Logar, a strategic province which lies due south of the embattled Afghan capital, was a former heartland of Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami before the Taleban rose to power and captured the area last year.

It lies directly behind the main Taleban base of Chahar Asiab, which is 25 kilometers (15 miles) south of here and which was until 1994 Hekmatyar's base, and its seizure by the government would deal a serious blow to the Taleban, analysts here said.

The government launched an attack against the Taleban in two pockets of neigbouring Vardak province in April, but the attempt was repelled by the militiamen who retain full control of both Vardak and Logar.

Hekmatyar took over 12 days ago as head of a new coalition government under a landmark accord signed between him and President Borhanoddin Rabbani.

The union between Rabbani's shaky coalition government and Hekmatyar was seen by many analysts here as being mainly aimed at forming a joint military alliance against the Taleban.

The new government has however denied the claim, saying the alliance was part of an "axis for peace" and was not aimed at continuing the fighting which has wracked Afghanistan for nearly 17 years.

Hekmatyar's strong comments on possible future military operations around Kabul came just two days after

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eight people were killed and 26 others injured in a Taleban shell attack on Kabul, officials said.

The bombardment came after the premier's arrival in Kabul last month, his first time here in 16 years, was marked by the heaviest and most murderous rocket and shell barrage of the city for more than a year.

At least 64 civilians were killed and 140 wounded during a day of salvoes which officials here said were fired by the Taleban in a bid to prevent Hekmatyar's arrival and his inauguration as prime minister.

During Sunday's cabinet meeting, Hekmatyar told his six new ministers sworn in on Saturday [6 July] as well as 20 caretaker ministers that government expenditure must be cut.

He said the vast and unwieldy civil service should be trimmed back to "avoid over-employment and to economise on expenditure," Kabul Radio said.

The prime minister ordered the setting up of a commission to examine cutting costs in the state media sector by "reconsidering the publication of some necessary and unnecessary periodicals," it said.

His comments came two days after he launched a ferocious attack on Kabul's tiny foreign press corps, accusing them of spreading "baseless propaganda" and "analysing" events "instead of reporting."

Hekmatyar said that as guests in Kabul, foreign journalists should not be allowed to "undermine government programmes."

Hekmatyar, a former mojahedin resistance leader who helped oust Afghanistan's Soviet invaders in 1989, joined his former enemies in the Kabul government after signing a pact with Rabbani in May.

The accord ended more than two years of bitter hostilities between the two factions which began when Hekmatyar — then serving his first term as premier — and northern warlord General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam launched an abortive coup attempt against Rabbani in early 1994.

Afghanistan: Rabbani Attends Swearing in of New Cabinet

LD0607160096 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1430 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The new cabinet was sworn in today before the president at the headquarters of the presidency.

BAKHTAR reports that at a ceremony held on this occasion, esteemed Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, first spoke about the responsibilities of cabinet members. He said: Under the present conditions and circumstances, accepting responsibility is not a privilege but an act of devotion and self-sacrifice. Our country is passing through (?difficult days] with political, military, and economic problems. The enemies of [word indistinct] are trying to suffocate and disrupt the national unity. But here the jehadi leaders and men of jehad have joined hands in order to become a united strong front against the nation's enemies. The aim of this unity is to end the fighting, restore national unity, set up a powerful central government, and prevent the disintegration of the country.

At the end of the ceremony, the country's prime minister took part in a news conference and answered questions raised by the journalists.

Afghanistan: Further on Rabbani's Remarks at Cabinet Swearing-In

LD0607205596 Tehran IRNA in English 2038 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Afghanistan, July 6, IRNA — Afghan cabinet minsters led by Prime Minister Golboddin Hekmatyar were sworn in Saturday [6 July] afternoon. President Borhanoddin Rabbani who attended the ceremony wished success for the cabinet and also added that the first preoccupation of the administration was to ensure the establishment of Islamic foundations in the country, peace and security and solve economic problems of the nation.

He said the enemies of Muslims had long since tried to prevent Muslim unity but that the leaders of the jihad had again thwarted the plots of their common enemies as the result of their unity.

Afghan Prime Minister Hekmatyar said that the new administration in Afghanistan had been instituted based on a spirit of brotherhood and that the road was open for all other parties in that country to contribute to the cabinet. He promised that he would try enlist the support of parties that were not represented with the administration for the purpose of creating an administration with full representation of all parties within the framework of national interests.

Afghanistan: Rabbani's 'Top Commander' in Southwest Reportedly Killed

BK0607154696 Hong Kong AFP in English 1531 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] PESHAWAR, Pakistan, July 6 (AFP) — A top commander of Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani in southwestern Afghanistan has been assassinated, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) reported Saturday. [6 July]

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Allaoddin Khan was killed by one of his guards in western Pashtoon Zarghoon area near Herat four days ago, the Peshawar-based Afghan information agency said.

The details, including the motive behind the killing, were not known, the agency said.

Khan was given command of pro-Rabbani forces in place of Ismail Khan who fled into neighbouring Iran from Herat after the key western province was captured by the Taleban Islamic militia in September.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Prime Minister Not To Allow 'Interference' by Army

BK0607143196 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1200 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said that the armed forces will not be allowed to interfere, and their activities will be supervised by the chiefs of the three services in accordance with the chain of command. The prime minister was addressing the officers and soldiers of the Ninth Infantry Division at Savar cantonment today. She said the objective of the present government is to forget the narrow-mindedness of the past and implement the dream of the Father of the Nation to make the brave armed forces well-organized, impart them with modern training, and build them up into an efficient and modern force. She said that they will be provided with a guideline to uphold the national interests in accordance with the hopes and aspirations of the people.

In her speech, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said that a specific policy will be implemented with a view to build up the armed forces into a modern and efficient force. She added that measures will also be taken to expand their sphere of work in the international arena to coordinate efforts to establish world peace.

Major General Imamuzzaman, general officer commanding, in his speech thanked the prime minister and presented her with a crest of the Ninth Infantry Division. The prime minister is in charge of the Defense Ministry.

Bangladesh: Begum Zia Sworn In as Parliament Member

BK0507154496 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Today, Begum Khaleda Zia, chairperson of Bangladesh National Party [BNP] and former prime minister, took her oath in the parliament to be member of parliament from Feni-1 constituency. Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali administered the swearing-in at a simple ceremony in his chamber in the parliament house. The ceremony was attended by A.K.M. Badruddojoa Chowdhury, Saifur Rahman, Khondaker (?Dilawar) Hossain, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, M. Shamsul Islam, A.K.M. Obaidur Rahman, and Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf and other BNP leaders.

After taking the oath, Begum Zia said that her party will make wholehearted efforts to strengthen parliamentary democracy in the seventh parliament.

Bangladesh: Indian Official Arrives With Gowda Message for Hasina

BK0507135796 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1200 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Indian Foreign Secretary Salman Haider has arrived in Dhaka today on a three-day visit to Bangladesh. He was received by Bangladeshi Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan at the airport.

Talking to newsmen at the airport, Salman Haider said he comes to Dhaka as an special envoy of Prime Minister Deve Gowda to deliver a message to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. When asked about the issues which will be discussed during his talks with his Bangladeshi counterpart, the Indian foreign secretary said his main task is to hand over the messages of Indian prime minister and the external affairs minister. He said that (?during his stay) in Dhaka he will have an opportunity to exchange views with the Bangladeshi foreign secretary. He added that he did not come for talks this time. Bangladesh's High Commissioner to India Shafi Sami, India's Ambassador to Dhaka Dev Mukherjee and senior officials of the Foreign Ministry were present at the airport.

India

India: Muslim 'Militant' Group Takes 19 Journalists Hostage

BK0807093996 Hong Kong AFP in English 0931 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SRINAGAR, India, July 8 (AFP) - A renegade Moslem militant group took 19 journalists hostage Monday [8 July] as they were on their way to a press conference held by another group, an editor said here.

The journalists, including AFP correspondent Surinder Oberoi and photographer Tauseef Mustafa, were taken by the Jammu Kashmir Ikhwan group at Anantnag town, 55 kilometers (34 miles) south of here.

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"For the moment they are all safe," said Manzoor Anjum, editor of Uqab (Falcon) newspaper, whose journalist is also in captivity.

India: 16 More Killed in Kashmir; Western Hostages Discussed

BK0507143296 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In occupied Kashmir, 16 more people have been martyred in fresh clashes and firing by Indian troops and their agents. Six of them were killed in Nangeth where Indian agents entered a house and shot dead the owner of the house, his wife, and four daughters. The incident triggered furious anti-India protests.

Four more persons were gunned down by troops in Chowdora and Srinagar. Mujahideen blasted two military vehicles in landmine explosions, killing two soldiers and critically injuring a number of troops. Mujahideen attacked with hand grenades military vehicles at Babarshan near the police station in Srinagar and wounded several troops. Reports from Kupwara said a number of troops were killed and injured in an encounter with Mujahideen in the area. One mujahid was martyred. Three more soldiers were killed in a clash in the same area.

In Hindwara area, the house of a mujahid commander was raided by troops. The inmates were subjected to violence and the house was later burned to ashes. A settlement in Pulwama was besieged by troops and the people were subjected to physical violence. The people of the area staged anti-India demonstrations and observed protest strike.

Meanwhile, a German delegation, which arrived in Srinagar at the completion of one year of the four Western tourists abduction, had a meeting will the All Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders and exchanged views on the release of the hostages. Mohammad Yasin Malik assured the delegation on behalf of the Hurriyat Conference that they are ready to extend every assistance in this matter. He, however, told them that because of Indian troops and their agents, movement in the area had become difficult. The delegation told the Kashmiri leaders that their sympathies are with the Kashmiris and they desire that the Kashmir problem be resolved.

India: Germans Meet on Hostages; Kashmir 'Militants' Shoot 10

BK0707160396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A delegation of members of the German parliament met the [Kashmir] state governor, general K.V. Krishna Rao, in Srinagar. The governor assured them that the government will not spare any effort to trace the four foreign tourists who were abducted by the Al-Faran outfit a year ago.

In the Kashmir valley, militants shot dead 10 laborers working at a brick kiln at a village in Kupwara District late last night. A PTI report says the laborers were abducted from the kiln yesterday evening and later their bullet-ridden bodies were found from a nearby place.

India: Court Upholds Deve Gowda's Appointment as Prime Minister

BK0607093196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Delhi High Court has upheld the appointment of Mr. H.D. Deve Gowda as the prime minister, despite his not being a member of parliament. Dismissing a public interest petition yesterday, the two-judge bench comprising Mr. Justice Jaspal Singh and Mr. Justice J.K. Mira ruled that the appointment of Mr. Deve Gowda is not against the Constitution.

India: Portfolios of New Ministers Announced

BK0607090196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The portfolios of the new ministers who were sworn-in yesterday have been announced. Mr. Raghubans Prasad Singh will hold independent charge of the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairy. Mr. Dilip Kumar Ray will now hold the office of the minister of state with independent charge of the Ministry of Food Processing and Industries. Mr. Satpal Maharaj will be the minister of state for railways. Mr. N.V.N. Somu will be the minister of state for defense and Mr. T.R. Balu, the minister of state for petroleum and natural gas. Mr. R.L. Jalappa, who has been elevated to cabinet rank, will be the minister of textiles.

India: Federal Council of Ministers Expanded

BK0507124396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The union council of ministers has been expanded. While the textiles minister, Mr.

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R.L. Jalappa, has been elevated to cabinet rank, four new ministers of state have been inducted. They are: Mr. Raghubans Prasad Singh of Janata Dal, Mr. Satpal Maharaj of Congress-Tiwari, Mr. N.V.N. Somu, and Mr. T.R. Balu — both of DMK. [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam]

The president, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, administered the oath of office and secrecy to the new ministers at Rashtrapati Bhavan [President House] a short while ago. With this expansion, the strength of the council of ministers has gone up to 39.

India: Parliament Speaker, Iranian Envoy Discuss Cooperation

LD0507132196 Tehran IRNA in English 1257 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, July 3, IRNA — Iranian ambassador to India, 'Ali Reza Sheykh 'Attar, called on speaker of Lok Sabha, lower house of Indian parliament, P.A. Sangma, here today and discussed the cooperation between the two countries, particularly regarding the parliamentary affairs.

During the discussion, Sangma welcomed the establishment of Indo-Iranian parliamentary friendship council and hoped it would further strengthen the relationship between the two parliament.

Emphasizing on the need of cooperation between the two parliaments, Sangma also renewed his invitation to the Iranian Majles speaker Nateq-Nuri and said that the speaker's visit would be a turning point in parliamentary relations between the two countries.

While explaining the importance of Majles in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Sheykh 'Attar also conveyed Nateq-Nuri's felicitation to his Indian counterpart.

India: Janata Dal MP Maneka Gandhi Expelled From Party

BK0507115096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1135 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Janata Dal MP, Ms. Maneka Gandhi, has been expelled from the party for six years for antiparty activities. The decision to expel her was taken at the Janata Dal Secretariat meeting in New Delhi today.

India: Rao Interviewed on Prospects of Congress Party

BK0507150596 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 5 Jul 96 p 11

[Interview with Former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, by Bhaskar Roy — place and date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Q: Your speech in Parliament during the debate on the motion of confidence left a deep impression. All the sides — your detractors, your supporters — seemed to be been overawed by your intellectual prowess. It is difficult to reconcile this image of a scholar-statesman with the spate of corruption charges being made against you allegedly involving friends and family members?

A: Thanks for the compliment but I am not able to answer this question except by pleading total ignorance of the allegations you refer to.

Q: Have you seriously considered the question of giving up the party leadership?

A: I am the elected president of the Congress. All I can tell you is that I have not in any way lowered the prestige of that position. Allegations, false as they are cannot have any effect on what I do or do not do with the trust I am holding.

Q: Media reports claim that the Prime Minister's Office played an important role in facilitating the fraudulent urea deal. And there is talk about the fabulous wealth and assets acquired by those close to you?

A: My entire family is separated. I am a widower. Thus each one of us — whether near or far — is responsible completely for his or her acts and omissions. I have not — and will not — come in the way of any process whatsoever to bring anything regarding any of them to light under the law.

Q: What do you attribute the decline of the Congress party to? Did it happen because the charismatic Nehru-Gandhis had ceased to be at its helm, or due to the failure of the present leadership or because the Congress appeal lost much of its relevance with the emergence of the forces casteism and communalism?

A: Each one of these has contributed to the present situation over a period plus several others — like the change in the generations of voters and their changing aspirations. They want to see how far the Congress has or has not been able to manage this vast change that has come over the decades. I think the achievement of all parties, in coping with each of these causes has been partial. This is only a statement of fact and not meant as an alibi for the Congress.

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Q: Is it possible for the Congress to regain its predominant position ever again or will it have to adjust to its new role as one of the many players in a broad anti-BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] alliance?

A: There is a history to the subject matter of this question. Taking into account the party's standing, pre-Independence track record, quality of leadership provided over the decades, territorial spread, public cognition etc., I can claim that the Congress is still the "predominant" party in the country. Predominance is both relative and absolute and has also changed from time to time. And the position of the Congress has not been the same at all times.

The strength of the Congress, however, becomes crucial in the context of the future of secularism in the country which is a very important foundation of the Indian Constitution and the Indian ethos. The point of secular parties alone being allowed to participate in elections in a secular democracy was raised by me in my presidential address in the plenary session of the Congress at Tirupati in April, 1992.

I had called for a nation-wide debate to clarify the issue. But the debate never ensued: on the contrary, as if in defiance of my question, the demolition of the Babri Masjid came in December 1992. The issue never got sorted out and the legitimacy imparted to the BJP's anti-secular stance for electoral purposes made it possible for that party to garner electoral gains continuously. There was, and could have been no other reason, by way of any extraordinary service rendered to the people, to make the BJP's Lok Sabha tally soar from two in 1984 to 88 in 1989 to 119 in 1991 to 161 this year.

It is crystal clear that there was a strong religious dimension assisting the BJP in motivating the people in a manner which was the opposite of what the other parties tried through their normal secular promises made in their manifestos.

As I see it now, secular combines could emerge against the BJP in the coming electoral battles if the parties concerned could bury their other differences. But this is only a passing phase, meant for one or two elections.

And in any event, negative combinations cannot be a permanent solution to this basic ideological issue.

The permanent solution is a situation wherein every party participating in any election under the People's Representation Act or under any municipal law anywhere, is in fact secular and enters the electoral arena with secular issues, in the full meaning of the term. This should be the essential meaning of any candidate declaring himself as owing allegiance to the Constitution of India. If this is not ensured effectively, in whatever way that may be required, communal polarisation in the electoral process is too tempting a short-cut and cannot be prevented with all its disastrous consequences.

Regarding the future role of the Congress, I am certain about one thing, that the party will always have an important role in the country's history. You are right that the Gandhi-Nehru era which, in more than one sense, came into bold relief in the context of British imperialism, cannot recur in its original form, for obvious reasons. But the role of the Congress as a unifying and harmonising force at home and a harbinger of peace sanity and equity abroad will always remain.

The Congress may in fact be having lesser men and women at the helm or in the ranks, but its roles defined above can never be called lesser in the future world. And I do believe that the role of the Congress will continue to be unique. This is not any sentimental stuff; I have strong and valid grounds for my belief.

Q: The shadow of Chandraswami is perhaps going to haunt you for a long time to come as he was perceived as being close to you. Now that he is in jail would you please clarify your relations with him; was he really in a position to influence major decisions during your prime ministership?

A: I have been acquainted with Chandraswami since the early seventies. He comes from Hyderabad. I do not know why his shadow should haunt me any more than the scores of politicians who know him. I do not recall having done anything under his influence in my official capacity, ever. This is the whole truth.

Q: Now that you are out of office, will you get back to writing?

A: I do intend to.

Q: What is your self-image. How, would you like to go down in history?

A: As a humble servant of the country.

Iran

Iran: Javadi-Amoli—Dhahran Blast Proves U.S. 'Unsafe' in Region

LD0507135496 Tehran IRNA in English 1331 GMT 5 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Qom, July 5, IRNA — Substitute Friday prayers leader of the holy city of Qom, Ayatollah Mohammad Javadi-Amoli, here today said that the U.S. various attempts against Iran are committed to be defeated.

He referred to the recent bomb blast near the U.S. headquarters in Dhahran (Saudi Arabia), saying that

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due to its unjustified and imposed presence in different countries, the United States feels unsafe everywhere in the world.

"Dhahran explosion once again proved that Saudi Arabia is not a safe peninsula for the global arrogance," he indicated.

Javadi-Amoli in his second sermon added that the Islamic revolution has found its firm and true place in the hearts of the fully awake and alert Muslims around the world.

Iran: Saudi Events Take Washington by Surprise

LD0607212496 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 3 Jul 96 p 12

[Unattributed Commentary: "Explosive Situation in Saudi Arabia Takes America by Surprise."]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. The bomb blast in an American military base in Dhahran unmasked a huge crisis in Arabistan [Saudi Arabia] and revealed the depth of that nation's hatred of America.

Although Saudi officials assured America that they would prevent similar incidents in the future and would stop operations against American military personnel, this assurance was not taken seriously and was perceived merely as a "political joke." The reason for this is clear. After all, the American forces have been sent to Arabistan to safeguard the Saudi regime's security. The question is, however, if the Saudi regime is able to safeguard both its own security and that of the American forces, then what is the need for the continued presence of American troops there.

Perhaps, the Saudi rulers fully understand that they cannot survive without America. However, they continue to give these assurances merely for "domestic consumption." In other words, they want to tell their people, in particular the powerful political opposition, that the Saudi dynasty not only has no problems in ensuring political security in its own land, but it is also capable of guaranteeing the safety of American forces stationed there!

Of course the powerful front opposing the Saudi regime is not so naive and simple-minded as to be unaware of the issues surrounding them. For sure, they are fully aware of the aims of the American forces' presence in Arabistan.

Nonetheless, it seems that both the American and the Saudi leaders have been caught up in a whirlpool of consecutive events. They feel bitter that they have to face an ever-worsening crisis, which gets increasingly complicated; a crisis which they cannot escape easily.

All the existing evidence indicates that the events in Arabistan have caught the Washington statesmen completely by surprise. This time, even the tactics of "psychological war" and propaganda ballyhoo could not help America and conceal the extent of the increasing wave of protest in Arabistan.

Almost immediately after the Dhahran base bomb blast, Washington claimed that Iran was behind the bombing and then, as usual, tried to convince everyone else that its allegations were true, so that other countries would join the chorus of blaming Iran for the blast. These allegations were was made even though Washington had not had any time to carry out even the most preliminary and superficial investigation into the incident.

It was in the pursuit of this aim that Clinton got a slap in the face at the G-7 summit in Lyon, where he was booed. The allegations were made so ineptly that the U.S. State Department had to rescind it later on. The question remains, however, as to who the main perpetrators of the bomb blast in Dhahran are? What is their aim and what do they want? This is a logical question, which — if asked in a fair and impartial way — might produce some clear answers.

The main point, meanwhile, is that America, and even the Al Sa'ud, have always endeavored to lessen their troubles and by ascribing the internal events in that country to outside [sources], have tried to cover up Saudi Arabia's internal problems. The explicit meaning of that is that the powerful opposition front in Saudi Arabia has never been officially acknowledged and there is even an insistence and deliberate intent to knowingly and purposely ignore the existence of such a great and increasing power. That very method caused America to be deprived of the assessment of such a tremendous power and come to believe that apparently everyone in Saudi Arabia supports the Al Sa'ud. Nonetheless, this point must not be ignored, that it is a blatant insult against the people and various ideological factions in Saudi Arabia if we do not allow them the right and the courage to show themselves and to confront the treacheries of the Al Sa'ud and America's trouble-making.

Increasing and serious opposition in Saudi Arabia today is not something that can be denied. This surprising phenomenon has even penetrated the Al Sa'ud family itself and embraces an extensive spectrum of the ruling centers, including Saudi Arabia's academic-religious centers.

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The surprising point is that although this phenomenon has no similarity with the Islamic revolution [in Iran], the Al Sa'ud's status today has salutary similarities with the last months of the Shah's despotic rule in Iran which can easily be discerned. Even in instances which, because of the intense censorship, their reports do not leak outside the closed Saudi society, their warning signs — at times unconcealable — reveal the depth and extent of the people's serious and deep-rooted opposition.

The Al Sa'ud may want to create bloodbaths in order to intimidate its opposition or by adopting a more brutal policing policy than what is in place in Saudi Arabia now, force its opponents to adopt a "reactive position." Of course, the Al Sa'ud has shown its abundant talent for atrocity and slaughter. Such action might have been effective in Saudi Arabia in the past decade, but, logically, it seems unlikely for the Al Sa'ud to want to try its chances in that way at the moment and to prove to the Saudi people that it is everyone's enemy and considers everyone its own enemy. In that case, it will be dragging everyone to the streets by its own hands; it even is not unlikely that before such an event the situation gets totally out of control of the Al Sa'ud and even America. It is precisely for that reason that these days the thoughts of all the American strategists and analysts are concentrated seriously on Saudi issues. They seriously ask themselves about the value of the Al Sa'ud for America to merit its losing the whole of Saudi Arabia one day for the sake of protecting the Al Sa'ud.

The idea of finding a suitable successor for the Al Sa'ud regime precisely stems from that [consideration]. Of course the London government is a few paces ahead of America in this and has even chosen its substitute force and states that henceforward the survival of the Al Sa'ud regime contradicts Western interests. This idea, though delayed, has surfaced in America as well these days and everyone is saying that if until yesterday America needed the Al Sa'ud regime to safeguard the West's sovereignty over Saudi oil reserves, today the existence of the same regime has created insecurity and uncertainly in that regard. Thus, the Washington authorities are still unclear as to the motives of the Riyadh and Dhahran explosions, their message and the main target of the attacks: America or the Al Sa'ud or both. The truth of any of those three probabilities points the trend of analysis to particular directions and certainly will offer various and differing methods to Washington.

Although no information has been released regarding the identity of the perpetrator or perpetrators of the recent events in Saudi Arabia, logically it seems unlikely for these acts to be, first, a personal undertaking and, secondly, not to have any clear message and objectives. Third, there is no reason why these events may not occur again. Taking into account the closed security system controlling Saudi Arabia, to expect the release of any information on this might be futile. Therefore, the only recourse is to guess the most likely situation.

Within that framework, the recent events in Saudi Arabia might be a practical warning to the effect that the situation in that country has reached an "explosive stage" and there is no other way to express opposition to America and the Al Sa'ud except hostile confrontation with the Al Sa'ud and their supporters. Let us not forget that the Saudi [religious] scholars have declared their strong and serious opposition time and time again to the unnecessary American presence in Saudi territory. In recent years open letters signed by outstanding academic, religious, and even administrative Saudis have been published but the Al Sa'ud, instead of making their actions and decisions conform with contemporary conditions, by dismissing, imprisoning, torturing, and in certain cases even killing in spurious accidents the thinkers who are opposed to it, the Al Sa'ud has demonstrated that it is incorrigible.

Today's events in Saudi Arabia prove that apparently the powerful opposition front has come to the certain and definite conclusion that it cannot come to terms with the Al Sa'ud. This certitude has cost the Al Sa'ud dearly and brought the situation to a point where the main question today is whether the Al Sa'ud should be or not be.

It may be that America also will come to prefer gradually to investigate the idea of a new regime succeeding to power in Saudi Arabia. That is because a pleasure-seeking, useless — and, from now on, even "detrimental" — family which still thinks in medieval terms and acts according to the standards of the stone age and does not credit at all the public's vote, might have been supported up to yesterday because there was no open and significant opposition to it. But today no one — not even at Saudi government managerial levels — prefers this medieval style of government.

It may be to the American and the West's benefit to take the initiative for a republican rule to succeed in Saud Arabia before the situation becomes more serious and the wave of opposition and crises becomes even more extensive to the extent that even America loses control over the situation. That is because the existence of the Al Sa'ud regime in the principal reason behind the crisis in Saudi Arabia.

The explosion at America's military base in "Dhahran", no matter what its objective and motive, bears this clear

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and explicit message for America: the military presence of America in Saudi Arabia is not tolerable. Perhaps America's last resort may be a new government to succeed in Riyadh which would not need America's military-security support to this extent and would be capable at least of safeguarding its own security; forget safeguarding the security of U.S. forces!

Iran: Tehran Threatens Not To Accept New Turkish Ambassador

LD0507153496 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 2 Jul 96 p 12

[News report: "Iran Will Not Accept the New Turkish Ambassador"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Foreign desk: [passage omitted] Informed political sources refer to the fact that the tenure of the Turkish ambassador to Iran is nearing its end and mention the possibility of a delay in the acceptance of the new ambassador of that country. They say that such action will not take place if the Turkish Government apologizes. Such a measure will show the lack of respect by Ankara for international norms, particularly since the present Turkish ambassador in Tehran has further highlighted this lack of respect by covering up the crime committed by the first secretary of the Turkish Embassy in Tehran and by not having done anything about paying compensation to the family of the mother and daughter of the victim who was killed by the Turkish diplomat.

Iran: Daily Warns Turkey About Bombing Iranian Border Areas

NC0507162496 Tehran HAMSHAHRI in Persian 2 Jul 96 pp 1,15

[Editorial by Sa'id Leylaz: "Do Not Have Any Doubts About Iran's Defense Determination"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the past few days two very unfortunate but different incidents occurred that compel us to mention our sensitive up-and-down relations with our Western neighbor, the Republic of Turkey.

In the first incident, a Turkish diplomat was responsible for a road accident while driving on the streets of Tehran in which a mother and daughter were killed. In the second case, the Turkish Air Force, which was ostensibly "in pursuit of internal dissidents," bombed residential areas along our common border, killing six people and wounding a large number of citizens of the Islamic Republic of Iran in their homes and inflicting considerable damage.

Turkey—as regards Iran's diplomacy as well as its longstanding close and active role in our joint history—is of strategic and vital importance to the Islamic Republic of Iran and one cannot overlook relations with that country. Despite the existence of tensions and wide fluctuations, in the past 18 years this strategy has shown in practice that the Ankara officials also need to recognize its importance.

The fact is that in view of the recent events and also considering that the coalition government of Necmettin Erbakan has come into power in Ankara, there seem to be certain circles in that country that are striving to mar the relations between our two countries, perhaps with the objective of exerting pressure on the nascent Erbakan government.

Of course, the unfortunate accident in Tehran should be viewed as unintentional and should not be permitted to cause tension in bilateral relations. By going through legal channels, the issue can be settled in a satisfactory manner. However, the bombing of border areas so frequently should in principle prove to our Turkish brothers in Ankara that there are some "government" circles in that country that are not in favor of continuing fraternal relations between our two countries.

In view of the fact that there are no strategic or even tactical relations in the world that are unilateral, the Ankara hierarchy should know that they cannot trifle so easily with an important country such as Iran — which has a longstanding history of some centuries and especially in view of its past 18 years — or subordinate it to their relations with the United States and Israel, and to the red and green lights of the West.

In the same context, Turkey's strained relations with the Islamic world and its Muslim neighbors following its signing of an accord with the Zionist regime and its pressure on Iraq and Syria will not assist it in getting into the EU nor will its "Westernization" gain any official recognition.

Despite all the developments of the past few years in Turkey's domestic and international relations, it is nevertheless evident that in the final analysis that country has an Eastern and Islamic identity and should coexist amicably with its Muslim neighbors, as it has for centuries.

When the dust from the collapse of the bipolar system settles, Turkey will see that its greatest importance lies in its position as a political, cultural, and geographic bridge between the Christian West and the Muslim East, but this distinction does not mean that in order to construct one end of the bridge, the other end should be destroyed.

Looked at within this framework and from this angle, what are the objectives of the increased closeness

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between Ankara and the United States and Israel, which is to the detriment of the Islamic world and the Arabs? Why have the policies of the Turkish politicians toward Iraq, Syria, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and even Egypt marred relations with those countries? These are questions that the Ankara strategists [preceding word in English, transliterated into Persian] should answer.

The aim of this article is not to encourage our domestic press to ignore such unfortunate events as the accident in Tehran, but tell them we expect them to keep such incidents within limits, bearing in view the higher interests of the system and the Islamic government. On the other hand, we expect the Turkish hierarchy not to treat sensitive matters such as the bombing of our common border areas in a cavalier manner, and not to have an iota of doubt about the Islamic Republic of Iran's wholehearted and unswerving defense of its borders and citizens.

Iran: Tehran Comments on RP-DYP Government's Policies

NC0507203596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Turkish 1630 GMT 4 Jul 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The establishment of the RP [Welfare Party]-DYP [True Path Party] government under Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan has ended the political crisis in Turkey. The establishment of the new government by an Islamic political party has shocked secular circles in the Western countries.

The meeting Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan had with State Department Under Secretary Peter Tarnoff and Defense Department Under Secretary Jan Lodal shortly before the Turkish National Assembly convenes to vote on the new government has attracted the attention of political circles and journalists. The prime minister's office issued a written statement to inform the people of Erbakan's meeting. The statement recalled the public view that Hammer Force activities conflict with Turkey's national interests and noted that the meeting discussed the possibility of reconsidering the Hammer Force mandate.

Everyone knows the pro-Islamic RP's election campaign maintained that it would object to the Hammer Force presence in Turkey and that it would abrogate the Turkey-Israel agreement on military cooperation. But considering the provision in the RP-DYP coalition protocol, that the two sides will remain committed to the international agreements that do not conflict with Turkey's national interests, political circles, convinced that the term national interests is open to interpretation, said that the RP-DYP program is a rather moderate document.

Prime Minister Erbakan informed the U.S. officials that Israel must withdraw from the occupied territories and agree to comply with the UN resolutions. Considering his approach, political commentators say he will move to improve Turkey's relations with the Islamic countries, including the Arab states.

Meanwhile, the Arab countries have welcomed the new government in Turkey formed by a pro-Islamic political party. The Syrian people reportedly welcome the new government. The Arab League has described it as a positive development for relations between Turkey and the Arab world. The deputy secretary general of the Arab League has said that the Erbakan government will strengthen relations between Turkey and the Arab countries and take initiatives to promote the interests of Turkey and the Islamic world. He also drew attention to Turkey's historic relations with its neighbors, particularly Syria.

Meanwhile, political experts say the appointment of RP leader Necmettin Erbakan as prime minister will be important for the Islamic countries, including the Arab states. Recalling Turkey's dispute with Syria and Iraq on sharing the Euphrates' transnational water, they also say that better Turkish relations with the two countries will be important for the region's security.

Reportedly, considering the reaction of some Arab countries, the Erbakan government could decide to reconsider the military agreement between Turkey and Israel.

Iran: Daily Questions Turkey's Intentions Following 2 Incidents

LD0607140296 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 2 Jul 96 p 14

[By Majid Razzazi: "In Connection With the Murder of Two Iranian Citizens by a Turkish Diplomat — Have the Officials Performed Their Duty?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] "It has been announced that the case mentioned (the killing of two citizens of Tehran by a Turkish diplomat) has not met with any procrastination and the country's judicial system has performed its duty, and that other issues relevant to the case do not concern the judiciary."

Driving his car in a crowded area, faster than the legal limit, a [Turkish] diplomat crushes two pedestrians under the wheels of carelessness and kills them. Then, instead of stopping and performing the most basic humanitarian duty, he escapes from the scene of the

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accident like a drunkard, and immediately afterward leaves Iran with the help of his country's embassy. This accident can be analyzed from two different perspectives:

1 — Concerning the viewpoint of the officials of a foreign country on an offense committed by one of their own men in another country.

What is important here is the indifference of the Turkish officials toward an offense that has hurt the feelings of the people of our country. The accident would have been an ordinary case if the driver had stopped and helped to take the injured to the hospital. But, when following such an accident the driver shows carelessness and the officials of the [Turkish] embassy help the offender leave the country, it is natural that the interpretation of the case implies nothing but ignorance toward the feelings and sentiments of a great nation.

Worse than that, the same intentions are further revealed a while later: The Islamic Republic of Iran's airspace is violated by the Turkish Army's missile attack, as a result of which a number of innocent and brave women and children who lived on the border are martyred. The Turkish Army then totally denies that such an attack took place! It was expected that following such a clear offense an apology would be made to the noble people of Iran, followed by an immediate promise to pay compensation as well as a promise that similar incidents would not be repeated in future.

2 — Another point is about a statement issued by the Justice Ministry yesterday announcing that the judiciary has performed its duty in the case of the killing of two citizens of Tehran by a Turkish diplomat. The statement interprets the duty of the officials in this respect as preparations for the payment of blood money to the families of the victims.

Now it would be appropriate to seek an answer to a question. It is correct that blood money is usually paid when unintentional killing takes place, but do our laws embody any kind of punishment for someone who makes a dastardly escape after committing a murder of that kind, a murder that was in fact committed with the intention of trampling upon the blood of the victims?

Iran: Daily Denounces Turkey's 'Irresponsible' Attitude

NC0607144196 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 29 Jun 96 p 12

[Report from the ABRAR Foreign News Desk]

[FBIS Translated Text] Turkish helicopters bombarded the Silvana district in Orumiyeh, West Azerbaijan last Wednesday [26 June]. As a result, six civilians were martyred and 15 were wounded. The Turkish ambassador was summoned immediately to the Foreign Ministry and a protest was lodged against the actions of the Turkish Air Force. Last night, Ankara indirectly denied the crimes of the Turkish forces.

In the course of the past 18 years, Turkish governments have repeatedly disrupted Tehran-Ankara relations. If we were to view the performance of the Turkish governments since the time of General Kenan Evren to date we would see numerous such examples.

1. The deployment of the forces affiliated to the erstwhile general of the Pahlavi regime, Ariana, on the eastern borders of Turkey.
2. The cooperation between the Turkish intelligence organization (MIT) with the Monafeqin ['hypocrites'].
3. The violation of our airspace in 1371 [year beginning 21 March 1992] (This action was opposed by our Air Force and some Turkish planes were forced to land at our country's airfields)
4. The bombing of the region of Western Iran in 1372 in which nine persons were martyred and 19 wounded.
5. The establishment of an espionage network in some parts of the country; and so on.

In addition, Turkey's adventurism has not been confined to Iran. In the past few years Greece, Cyprus, Syria, Iraq, and Armenia have protested against its expansionist policies.

However Ankara has always wriggled out of these situations with "apologies," "compensation for losses sustained," and even by accusing the other side.

The Turkish Government's irresponsible attitude toward international norms has been so blatant that its diplomats have even resorted to crimes and have departed from their posts after killing the country's citizens and then fleeing home. There is no doubt that there is a limit to the patience and restraint of every country, and this should also be true of Iran and Turkey.

In this regard, the various solutions Iran has to choose from are to lodge a diplomatic protest, reduce the level of diplomatic relations, and so on.

The Turkish Government's repeated justifications can no longer convince the Iranian Government and people. If the Turkish politicians and militarists cannot adhere to the principle of good neighborliness with others, they should be persuaded to do so.

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Iran: Iranian Embassy Release Recalls Vincennes Incident

LD0507085396 Tehran IRNA in English 0633 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, July 5, IRNA — The cowardly attack of the American frigate Vincennes, on an Iranian passenger airbus on its way from Bandar Abbas to Dubai on July 3, 1988 has registered with history as a terrorist act committed by a government claiming to be the protector of human rights, says a press release by the Embassy of Iran here.

Issued on the 8th anniversary of the savage attack, the release says that it is doubly-regretting that the so-called champion of the human rights tried to fabricate the story that the Iranian passenger airliner intended to attack American frigate, was flying out of the proposed corridor and had reduced its altitude.

More surprisingly, those who brought down the airliner received a floral welcome in America and were praised as war heroes. The worst was that the then American President George Bush awarded the commander of the American warship with a "medal of valor," says the release.

Saying that the brutal crime was the direct consequence of the U.S. tension-provoking massive military presence in the Persian Gulf, the release calls for U.S. withdrawal from the region without which stability and security cannot be achieved in the region.

The release concludes: Now, considering various American terrorist activities across the world, an obvious example of which is the downing of an Iranian passenger airbus, it is time we asked the freedom loving people of the world these questions: What is terrorism? Which country is the real terrorist? And how a terrorist state itself can fight against terrorism?

Iran: Daily Says U.S. Threat Continues Years After Plane Downing

LD0507131696 Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL in English 2 Jul 96 pp1,7

["Viewpoint" article entitled: "Flight 655 and the American Threat"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] This past week, some top U.S. officials were in the Persian Gulf region telling the Arab regimes to do more to protect American facilities and forces on their territory. A massive bomb blew up a building housing U.S. military personnel in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, killing 19 and wounding hundreds, mostly Americans.

Now the Clinton White House is seriously concerned about the "vulnerability" of U.S. soldiers and military advisers not only on Saudi territory but across the strategic Persian Gulf region. According to known statistics, the U.S. has some 20,000 troops in and around the (P)GCC states.

Against this background and the stark reality of where America's military agenda is pushing the region, one should consider the consequences of American criminality when it shot down Iran Air Flight 655 over the Persian Gulf on 3d July 1988, killing 290 civilians.

The innocent flight was not targeted by some unruly marine or recruit in the U.S. navy. The USS Vincennes, an Aegis class guided missile cruiser equipped with the most sophisticated radar and electronic battle gear, knowingly fired two Standard surface-to-air missiles on the Dubai bound Airbus-300.

Eight years ago, tomorrow, the "civilized world" and its proponents of liberty, freedom, democracy and human rights heard and saw how the world's superpower blew up a commercial flight in mid-air. The aircraft fell from the sky like a ball of fire. There were no survivors and several bodies were never retrieved from the waterway.

American state terrorism had indulged in an unspeakable crime, but the Reagan administration insisted that it was a case of "mistaken identity." No person in his right senses could buy that nonsense then, as now. The Muslim masses, if not all their leaders, were and are aware that the so-called international community too had then displayed outright indifference and incompetence on a heroic scale.

From 1988 until now, American terrorism seems more determined to pursue its own destructively hegemonistic aims in the Persian Gulf. More often than not, its view and vision are suicidical rather than anything else. Two deadly bomb blasts in Saudi Arabia alone sent 25 Americans to their grave (the unofficial toll is reportedly much higher).

Muslims in Bahrain and other tiny shaykhdoms are telling their leaders that they don't want the yankees. On the other hand Washington knows how to work the Arab political system to its own advantage, as it simply cannot afford to get out of the oil-rich region. It is aware that its military presence can only delay, not eliminate, a show-down between the Arab peoples and their unelected rulers.

Nevertheless, if America's case for pouring military personnel and hardware in the region rests on the hope that it might intimidate Tehran and keep the Muslim Arabs under its thumb, it is a weak argument indeed. In fact U.S. arrogance and aggression against Iran and

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Iraq has so far only instigated religious and nationalist emotions. Saudi Arabia and Bahrain are the most vivid examples.

America has grounds to be angry with Iran. After all its Iran strategy up until the late 1970s centred on one man: Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. The 1979 Islamic revolution left American policy in shambles and taught our leaders and administrators how well to pursue their declared aims. They go slowly but surely.

Elementary political arithmetic has it that our Arab neighbours look at the prevailing volatile situation with open minds and stand up to their obligations before America becomes an occupying power in the oil-rich region.

Flight 655 was as tragic as it was an eye-opener. Persian Gulf Arab leaders should not miss the bottom line. The huge, and growing US military presence in the region, and not Iran, represents the dominant threat to stability in this part of the world.

Iran: U.S. Foreign Policy Attacked

96LH0182A Tehran KAR VA KARGAR in Persian 17 Mar 96 p 7

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. President Bill Clinton has once again ventured into the turbulent political waters of the Middle East, in order perhaps to be able to calm the current crisis in the Zionist regime, but he is not sure about the political consequences in his own country from this impetuous move.

Clinton returned to his country last Thursday night from the land of eternal crisis, the Middle East, a region that has had little political benefit for U.S. presidents.

Clinton first went to Egypt and took part in a conference of leaders which had convened to express international backing for the Zionist regime.

After Egypt, he went to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, where he reassured the Israelis and praised Shimon Peres, the Zionist prime minister who has faced problems with his recent violence.

Peres, whose reelection as prime minister had seemed definite before this, now faces doubts about the extent to which his peace-seeking efforts have been regional.

Since Washington believes that Peres' positions and policies are the best ways to achieve peace in the Middle East, it wants Peres to remain as prime minister. Clinton praised Peres in front of the Israelis and said that the continuation of the Zionist regime's current leadership will result in support by this regime's most important and sincere allies.

Peres, who has been criticized for the weak foundations of his foreign policy, gave an exceptional welcome to Clinton.

He introduced Clinton sometimes as "one of the greatest figures in the world" and sometimes as "one of the world's greatest presidents."

With regard to the speed of Clinton's answer to the recent explosions in the Zionist regime and his pressure to convene a conference to fight terrorism in Egypt, he said: I have never seen such a thing in my life.

On the one hand, White House Spokesman Mike McCurry said with respect to Clinton's renewed relationship with the peace process in the region: We do not think that this will lead to political gains, but rather that it is merely the correct and sound thing to do.

He emphasized that previous U.S. leaders who tried to put an end to the clashes between the Arabs and the Jews have obtained only minor political gain.

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter was able to bring Anwar Sadat, the former president of Egypt, and Menachem Begin, former prime minister of the Zionist regime, together at the negotiating table in Camp David, and ultimately to obtain the signing of the so-called peace agreement between Egypt and Israel. This reinforced Carter's popular base, but in 1980, or 1359 [21 March 1970 - 20 March 1971], the Americans elected Ronald Reagan president.

George Bush, another former U.S. President, also entered into Middle East affairs with full resolve and achieved historic results. Bush was able to get many Arab nations into the Zionist regime's ring, and many nations of the world opposed Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, but in the presidential elections in 1992, or 1371 [21 March 1992 - 20 March 1993], Clinton won by emphasizing domestic problems as much as possible.

Intervention in the Middle East will not bring Clinton victory and may even cause him numerous problems.

This is something that in the past has gotten at least several U.S. Presidents into a struggle to remain in office, but as has happened in the past, essentially the people of America, due to their indifference to international affairs, have accepted each time the promises by the candidates to give preference to domestic problems over international affairs.

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Iran: Rafsanjani's Sends Congratulatory Message to Yeltsin

LD0507162896 Tehran IRNA in English 1613 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, July 5, IRNA — In a congratulatory cable here today Iran's President Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani congratulated Boris Yeltsin for being re-elected for the second term as the president of the Russian Federation.

In his message Rafsanjani wrote that his reelection as the Russian president of a nation whose new chapter of history is being written, is an approval of the Russian nation for his policies.

The president stated that the Russian nation have greatly contributed to the achievements and experience of the human community, adding that by re-electing him the Russian people have expressed their desire and full support for the continuation of implementation of the policies he has been pursuing not only to bring about development and prosperity to his country but also to establish peace and stability in the region as well as the world over based upon mutual respect and honoring of the rights of nations.

Rafsanjani expressed hope that the Russian president in his new term will pave the way for a new chapter to be opened in the history of Tehran-Moscow bilateral relations and further coopeation based upon international norms, practices and neighborly relations.

At the conclusion of the message on behalf of the government of Islamic Republic of Iran and the nation, President Rafsanjani expressed his best wishes for his robust health and success of the nation.

Iran: Daily Welcomes Yeltsin Election, Views 'Close' Ties

LD0607094996 Tehran IRNA in English 0858 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, July 6, IRNA — Commenting on the re-election of Boris Yeltsin as Russia's president, a morning daily Saturday [6 July] wrote that his re-election is welcomed in Iran as he has proven that Moscow is serious in pursuing an independent foreign policy free from U.S. pressure.

As to close relations between Iran and Russia following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the 'TEHRAN TIMES' stated that this stems from the fact that both countries play a crucial role in their respective regions, adding that the two have complementing economies and can help bolster regional cooperation, as well as maintaining regional peace and security.

The editorial further reiterated that Moscow can create a strong bloc with interested Third World countries in order to safeguard the interests of member states vis-a-vis unilateral decisions taken by the U.S. in the international arena.

Over the past few years, Russia should have learned lessons from its relations with the U.S., it stated, adding, "The fact that 40 percent of the Russian electorate voted for a Communist indicates that almost half of Russia's population is dissatisfied with the Western impact on Russia."

Yeltsin has the mandate of those who voted for him and the demand for change of those who did not, the daily noted.

It concluded that continuing the reforms will appease those who voted for him, while putting a distance from the West, especially the U.S., will expand his popular base at home and boost Russia's relations with Third World countries.

Iran: Velayati on Improvement of Relations With Egypt

LD0507124296 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 2 Jul 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Moves Under Way To Improve Irano-Egyptian Relations"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran: "In the light of the present circumstances in the Middle East, Irano-Egyptian cooperation will accelerate on regional and international issues," Foreign Minister Dr 'Ali Akbar Velayati told 'Iran News' yesterday.

In an interview with 'Iran News,' Velayati said, "Syria is trying to cultivate better Irano-Egyptian relations."

Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' during his negotiations in Iran mostly focused on better Irano-Egyptian relations, Velayati said.

The Damascus move followed a crucial Arab summit held late last month in Cairo. The Arab leaders themselves tried to patch up their differences in the Cairo summit.

Syria is trying to create a coordinated front among the Muslim countries particularly in the region to counter a common enemy, Velayati said referring to the Zionist regime.

The Middle East situation has become more uneasy and alarming because of the recent change in the government in Tel Aviv.

Binyamin Netanyahu, after assuming the post of prime minister, declared that his government would not fulfil

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the commitments made by his predecessor, Shim'on Peres, who was defeated in the May elections for the prime minister.

It is believed that now, more than any time in the past, the Middle Eastern countries are interested in having regional cooperation, which requires bilateral disputes be ironed out before any action in that direction.

Velayati said that Syria is trying to prepare the ground for coordination and cooperation between Iran and Arab countries.

"Syria is also trying to bring foreign relations of Tehran and Damascus closer on the Middle eastern issues," the foreign minister said.

"During the last few years, relations between Iran and Egypt have improved and Syria played an effective role in the process," Velayati told 'Iran News'.

Iran terminated diplomatic relations with Egypt when Cairo signed a peace accord with Israel in 1979. Both countries now maintain interest sections in their capital cities.

Iran: Daily Blasts Egypt's 'Absurd' Statements, U.S. Rhetoric

LD0807082696 Tehran IRNA in English 0647 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, July 8, IRNA — A morning daily Monday [8 July] editorialized on the absurd and contradictory remarks made by Egypt about Iran, stressing such statements would definitely delight those who are hostile to the interests of the Third World.

On the basis of foreign policy principles the Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to have closer and good relations with all countries in the world except Israel, added 'IRAN NEWS.'

Commenting on the U.S.-Zionist disinformation campaign launched against Iran since the culmination of the Islamic revolution, it stated that now, gradually, the world, particularly Europe, has realized the truth and no longer pays any attention to the rhetoric of the U.S. and its illegitimate Zionist offspring.

"A vivid proof emerged in the recently held G-7 summit in France where President Bill Clinton faced a humiliating defeat on the Iranian issue when Europeans refused to bow before the illogical U.S. moves against Tehran."

Calling on President Mubarak to note that the people of Iran and Egypt have cultural and economic relations that are improving rapidly, the editorial asked Egypt or any other neighboring country to forward any evidence proving the Islamic republic's involvement in subversive activities in their country.

It concluded by advising President Mubarak to put his own house in order instead of blaming others through absurd and contradictory statements.

Iran: Iran, Pakistan To Form Joint Border Commission

LD0607163396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Joint Irano-Pakistani border commission is to be formed in the near future. According to the Central News Bureau in Islamabad, during Iran's deputy [foreign minister] in consular and legal affairs, Mr. Morsedi, meeting with acting Pakistani interior minister, Mr. Elioseen, in Islamabad, the two sides agreed to form a joint border commission.

Both agreed to remove the existing hurdles and problems afflicting the two country's subjects and prisoners, as well as their consulate affairs.

Acting Pakistani Interior Minister Mr. Elioseen described Irano-Pakistani ties as close and friendly.

Iran: RESALAT Interviews Deputy Foreign Minister on Afghan Peace

LD0507150796 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 1 Jul 96 p16

[Unattributed article entitled: "Iran and Pakistan Have Agreed on Strengthening Afghanistan's Central Government"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A three-day seminar on Afghanistan and regional security started in Tehran on Sunday 30 June. [passage omitted]

On the first day of the seminar, we carried a brief interview with Mr. Abbas Maleki, the deputy foreign minister in charge of education and research. We draw your attention to this interview, during which we spoke about current developments in Afghanistan. [passage omitted]

Question: What can the Afghan Government do vis-a-vis the Taleban's plans and ideas?

Answer: The Taleban's ideas have no relevance at all to the interests of the Afghan nation. Moreover, the Taleban put forward a distorted view of Islam. For instance, ideas demanding that schools should be closed down and women should not be allowed to receive any education or even leave their homes are totally reactionary and regressive. These ideas have no place within either the sacred ideology of Islam or the culture

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of the East. Naturally, no government, including the Islamic Government of Afghanistan, can ever accept and tolerate such ideas.

Question: We saw that the Pakistani Government has also supported the coalition between Hekmatyar and Rabbani. How do you assess this?

Answer: During our negotiations with the Pakistani Government, the leaders of that country were gradually convinced that they should adopt a more realistic approach to regional issues. They are now moving in this direction, hence their agreement that the central government of Afghanistan should be strengthened.

Question: What do you think should be done to boost the practical impact of gatherings similar to the present seminar on Afghanistan and regional security?

Answer: We organized this seminar in order to provide a venue where all Afghan jihadi groups would be able to put their viewpoints forward and ascertain the findings of all bodies of research and study about their country. We expect that the Afghan groups will be able to fully benefit from this seminar.

Question: A few days ago, America made extensive efforts to bring all Afghan jihadi groups to a meeting in Washington. What was the result of America's invitation?

Answer: The move was unsuccessful because none of the Afghan jihadi groups took the meeting seriously. Only half of all jihadi groups took part in the meeting. Furthermore, the meeting did not embody any measure which would guarantee the implementation of any possible decision adopted there.

Iran: OSCE 'Opposed' to U.S. Plans To Isolate Iran

LD0607110496 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE] is opposed to American plans for isolating Iran and believes in cooperation with Tehran.

Willy Wimmer, vice president of the parliamentary assembly of the organization, told our correspondent in Germany: Cooperation with one government should not be used as an instrument against another and no one should expect us to go along with this.

He praised Iran for its role in solving regional problems such as those in Nagorno-Karabakh, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan and said: In order to expand our cooperation, the Swiss foreign minister, who is the OSCE chairman, is to visit Tehran soon.

Mr. Wimmer, who is in charge of relations with the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus in the organization, welcomed cooperation between his organization and the ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization] and said that the two organizations can work together not only in economic but also in security affairs.

Iran: Foreign Minister on Ties to Europe

96LH0188A Tehran IRAN NEWS in Persian 4 Apr 96 p 3

[Report on "exclusive interview" with Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati by a "correspondent from the AYINEH group;" place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati said: Efforts by Iran and Europe must be based on reinforcing points of commonality and reducing the points of difference. This is the basis of the Islamic Republic of Iran's view of its future relations with Europe.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with the correspondent from the AYINEH group, the foreign minister also emphasized the continued constructive talks between Iran and the European Union. He added: Relations between Iran and Europe are based on mutual interests, respect, and equal rights. This is the basis of the bilateral talks that began several years ago and are continuing.

Dr. Velayati announced that the Islamic Republic of Iran gives importance to its relations with Europe. He said: In their relations with Iran, the Europeans are following an independent policy appropriate to their own interests. We hope this policy will continue and will not be influenced by fleeting statements and factors that have nothing to do with the long-term relations between the two sides.

The foreign minister noted: There is no doubt that the relations between Iran and Europe must be have the appropriate strength with no brittleness, so that the two sides will be able count on them.

He said: It is clear that Iran and Europe have interests and that they should pursue their own interests based on long-term principles.

In this regard the two sides must try to reinforce the points of commonality and reduce the points of difference. This is the basis of our view of the future of our relations with Europe, and there certainly must be constructive periodic talks between the two sides.

Dr. Davud Bavand, a university professor and expert on European issues, also told our correspondent in this regard: In general the European Union, especially since the collapse of the former Soviet Union and other changes on the European continent itself and the

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adjustment of its security dependence on America, has acquired a more credible position in international affairs. For this reason, in some matters the European Union is not that much in agreement with America's views and positions on some international issues. Perhaps this can be called a kind of difference in taste between the European Union and America.

Before we discuss these differences in views, it is necessary to note that the deputies of the European Parliament, whether in the framework of the European Union Parliament or the European Consultative Parliament, do not take positions based purely on the national harmony of the relevant countries. For this reason, in the European Union Parliament the deputies from the relevant countries do not act as a national group, but rather their positions are affected by the views of groups and parties such as the socialists, the former communists, the Christian democrats, and others.

On this basis, the deputies are expected to serve the interests of groups and individuals and consequently have free outlooks that differ from those of their governments.

As was mentioned, on some issues the European Union is not inclined to endorse America's actions, just as America's actions in Libya were not endorsed by this union. Currently, in connection with some issues, especially Iran, there is a kind of difference in taste and view between the European Union and the United States.

In contrast with America's view about isolating Iran, Europe believes in developing its economic and financial relations with Iran.

Dr. Bavand added: In this regard three issues concerning the Islamic Republic of Iran are important to the Europeans:

1. The issue of Tehran's obtaining nuclear weapons. Europe knows that Iran does not have the ability to do this within the next six years in terms of the science and the technology.

2. Iran has accepted the views of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

3. Nations that cooperate with Iran in this respect may, in the face of U.S. pressure, be seeking trade and concessions of some kind, and ultimately this will result in complying with some of this country's desires.

Therefore, in this regard the Europeans do not welcome U.S. actions against Iran. As we said, they are trying to expand their economic and trade relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, although it must not be forgotten that to avoid the constant pressures, the Europeans would like to see some kind of adjustment in Iran's positions.

Hasan Qashqavi, deputy from Shahriar and member of the Islamic Consultative Majles Foreign Policy Commission, also believes that Iran's relations with Europe, including the member nations of the European Union, have a long historical background and that under current conditions both sides must seek to develop and reinforce them.

He said: The great changes in international affairs that took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s caused Europe to find greater political and economic independence, enabling it to base its relations with other countries on its true interests.

This member of the Islamic Consultative Majles Foreign Policy Commission discussed the refusal of the European nations to follow America's calculated positions against Iran, including its economic embargo against Iran last year. He added: In this situation the European nations showed that they have sought to take independent positions based on mutual interests with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Qashqavi assessed as important the current trip to Tehran by representatives of the European Union. He said: The door to constructive talks between Iran and the European Union has never been closed, and the two sides are interested, through their continuous talks, to create conditions to develop their bilateral political and economic relations as much as possible. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that the representatives of the European Union troika in Tehran will be able to put aside some of the existing minor doubts regarding relations.

Iran: Commentary Views Syrian Foreign Minister, Netanyahu Statements

LD0507183496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 5 Jul 96

[Unattributed Commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Syrian foreign minister, Faruq al-Shar', on Thursday 4 July, emphasised that the international resolutions guarantee an equal or may be even stronger principle than the principle of land in return for peace: and that is the principle of non-occupation and siege of other people's lands by force. Political observers evaluate Mr. Faruq al-Shar's statements to be a response to the Zionist regime's prime minister's explicit opposition to the principle of land in return for peace.

The Zionist regime's prime minister, Netanyahu, on Wednesday 3 July, in his remarks expressed doubt on

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the principle of land in return for peace, which was the basis of the holding of the Madrid conference in 1991. Evaluating the statements of Faruq al-Shar', political observers say that although the principle of land in return for peace was the basis of the Madrid conference, but during the Middle East reconciliation process, the Zionist regime intended to engage in separate talks with the Arab countries by creating division between them. This method of Israel was effective concerning the PLO and Jordan and the Zionist regime was able to make them withdraw from the united line of Syria and Lebanon by conceding them small privileges.

Therefore, political observers have evaluated Mr. Netanyahu's doubts on the UN resolutions and its principles as a new effort by the Zionist regime to obtain more concessions from the Arabs and to leave the Security Council resolutions in the files of history which had emphasized on the unconditional withdrawal of Tel Aviv from all occupied lands.

In reality, in conditions in which the Zionist regime questions the UN resolutions and its principles, which usually have a more stronger executive guarantee from the legal aspect, and forgets them, will there be any guarantee that in a new future it will also forget its incomplete agreements signed with Egypt, Jordan, and the PLO? In the opinion of these observers, in such conditions the union of Arab countries [Arab League] and their reconsideration on how to react toward the Zionist regime and the UN's decisive position in relation to Resolutions 242, 338 and 425 can force the Quds-occupying regime to implement the resolutions and compromises which it has apparently forgotten.

In reality, the Zionist regime's actions have proved to Mr. Faruq al-Shar' and other Arab authorities that it cannot be expected that the Zionist regime will respect its agreements and leave the occupied lands peacefully.

Iran: Joint Nateq-Nuri, Velayati Presidential Candidacy Denied

LD0507141696 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 3 Jul 96 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Islamic Coalition Association Denies Nateq-Nuri and Velayati To Be Joint Candidates for Presidency"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a letter to JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI, the Islamic Coalition Association has announced: "It is not true that the names of Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin ['Ali Akbar] Nateq-Nuri [Majles speaker] and His Excellency [Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar] Velayati have been mentioned as joint [tow'aman] candidates in the forthcoming presidential election at a session of the Islamic Coalition Association."

Iran: Ansar-e Hezbollah Reply to Criticisms

LD0507211496 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 2 Jul 96 p 2

[News item: "Ansar-e Hezbollah Issue Statement Responding to Some Criticism"]

[FBIS Translated Text] "Ansar-e Hezbollah" [supporters of Hezbollah] have replied to some criticisms expressed about them by individuals and groups in the last few weeks. The following are parts of their response:

If insulting the "Ansar" and the boys who are shouldering the responsibilities has become common in interviews, it is because a "good Basiji" [paramilitary volunteer] is a "dead Basiji." When the Basiji is dead they can weep over him without bothering about his politics. But if he walks down the street holding his flag and if he fights prostitution, vice and corruption, they call it religious violence!!! If he stands in the way of 'Abdolrahmanovs and the thieves of the public purse and the opponents of the Guardianship of the Jurisconsult, this is chaos. If he warns inefficient officials about their violations, he is breaking the law.

The Ansar brother is good as long as he has been martyred. But if waiting for martyrdom, he remains loyal to his covenant and refuses to be corrupted, he is violent, mad, and common. If he is enraged because he has seen the heart of the bird in the claws of the tiger, he is violent. If he has witnessed miracles in the loving struggles of his comrades, he is mad!

In this country, fascination with guiding others is endless. Everyone wants to speak but not listen. But God knows that we will not exchange our commonality for a thousand shrewdnesses and will not barter our zeal (which you call violence) for any tranquillity. We are not that stupid. Anyone who starts calculating in this commotion and steps into the hall of pure material judgement will, sooner or later, accept the most disgusting of compromises.

Is this not the policy of evolutionists [estehaleh talaban, ie. not revolutionary] who want to introduce things to public opinion through the gift of the gab and ultra-intelligent rationals, that they could not impose by the sword? Don't they want to state the enemy's allegations in a friendly language so as to make them acceptable in society and reduce their impudence? Don't they want to make us believe that the goals that we suffered for are not important and easy to auction?

Why do they imagine that painting several roads, building a few bridges, writing some articles against the Guardianship of the Jurisconsult, praising various Savak [Shah's secret police] fugitives and interviewing certain

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irreligious intellectuals will turn them into modern human beings?

Why are you attacking the absolute Guardianship of the Jurisconsult, for the development of which much innocent blood has been shed?! Why do you think that truth is summarized between the tennis court, water skiing, sauna, and your office?

You don't respect a hundred different laws and violate another one hundred, but when the Ansar scream about prostitution and treachery you accuse them of breaking the law?! What about the laws violated at the municipality, offices, the bazaar and the Majles elections.

The only law which we have violated is the law of "promoting evil and prohibiting the good"!! which is not the law of the Islamic Republic but the law of a people who want to devour and corrupt, a people who don't care for values such as the hejab and chastity.

How could superficial feminism serve women and society when it fails them both? Instead of reviving the religious right of women and helping them with their scientific, ethical, and social development and intelligence, this feminism is satisfied with cycling, wearing jeans and playing basketball. To this level it lowers the great status of the "Muslim woman." It is spoken by the rich, it barters vigilance with amusement, it turns women into irresponsible, phobic entities opposed to men. It fails to serve women by abandoning their great religious duty and thinks that riding bicycles will give them a social character.

No one had opposed women's sports, so what was the need to narrate poetry about women cycling? Are we opposing cycling if we say that there should not be vain behavior and corrupt meetings between individuals posing themselves as cyclists. We repeat again that construction is different from gluttony, extravagance, carelessness, treachery to the public purse and libertarianism.

Construction, as stated by the honorable president, Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Hashemi, is not conditional on the propagation of liberal thoughts and morality.

Why are some people trying to negate revolutionary mottoes, deny religious values and humiliate the Hezbollahi spirit instead of acknowledging construction?

Why are they tolerating, rationalizing and even aiding corrupt capitalists and their satellite culture instead of fighting poverty?

Finally, and once and for all, we repeat this belief that the services of the government and particularly his excellency, Hashemi-Rafsanjani, may God support him, are among the successful chronicles of the Islamic system. We believe that the honorable president is a true friend of the imam [Khomeyni] and the great leader [Khamene'i] and that the nation will not allow inconsistent, greedy, and irreligious elements to confiscate the Hashemis for themselves. They will take this dream to their grave.

Iran: Mashhad Hezbollahis Demonstrate Against Liberals

LD0507165396 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 1 Jul 96 p 14

[News report: "Mashhad Citizens Rally to Condemn Pro-Liberal Press"— by KEYHAN correspondent in Mashhad]

[FBIS Translated Text] A group of the members of Mashhad Hezbollah took part in a rally expressing their anger and hatred for the liberals and their supporters.

According to a report by our correspondent, during the rally — which took place on Saturday evening [29 June] in Ahmadabad Avenue in Mashhad and a group of the helpers [qavvamin] of Hezbollah took part in it — demonstrators chanted slogans against liberals and condemned their dastardly actions. They also requested that resorting to plots and propaganda by a number of publications aimed at promoting liberals be stopped.

According to the same report, during the gathering demonstrators honoured the martyrs of the Islamic revolution and the holy war [Iraq-Iran war] and announced their readiness to defend the sacred Islamic values. They also expressed their support for the Law Enforcement Forces.

It is worth mentioning that the Law Enforcement Forces were controlling the rally.

Iran: Problems of Employment, Inflation Viewed

LD0507162996 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 29 Jun 96 p 6

[Article by Seyyed Ahmad Hoseyni-Mahini: "Employment and Inflation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Employment and inflation have a two-way contradictory relationship. Inflation creates employment, but, on the contrary, employment reduces inflation. Inflation causes prices to rise with the effect that a number of people can enter the work market. Now, if this group enters the market in productive employment, then they cause inflation to reduce, but if their employment is not productive and has an unproductive aspect, then not only do they not reduce inflation, but

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also cause it to rise due to their unproductive employment, or, rather, due to speculation.

Opposing employment is unemployment. A cursory look at figures shows that of Iran's 55 million population in 1370 [year beginning 21 March 1991], 38.7 million were older than 10. Of those, 14.7 million were capable of work, 13 million of whom were employed and 1.64 million unemployed and seeking work.

Of 24 million who were not in active employment, 9.5 million were students, 12 million housewives, 454,000 retired and 1.88 million unaccounted for.

The largest number of job-seekers were aged between 20 and 24. They numbered 440,000. Of course, taking into account Iran's population, which is over 63 million—fifteenth in the world—the unemployment rate has risen.

Of course, in advanced countries, the young are not counted as unemployed. By definition, a young person is someone who is not married and has no job! They consider a young person to be aged between 18 and 28. In that case, a great number are eliminated from the unemployment figures.

Taking into account those over 55 years of age who are not able to work and should not be ranked as unemployed, Iran's unemployed in 1370 will be drastically reduced from 1.64 million to less than 460,000.

That is why America declares its unemployment rate as seven percent. In their eyes, those under 28 and even the blacks and the red Indians are not counted as unemployed! That is because if you add those up to the total, the unemployment rate will suddenly jump from seven percent to 25 percent. The reality is that out of every four people capable of work in America, one is unemployed. That is when, by definition, an unemployed person is one who has been in employment before but has been made redundant compulsorily and receives unemployment benefit! Since in defining unemployment, the ability to work and lack of jobs have not been taken into account, the unemployment figures are very low.

Anyhow, if the number of those in Iran who are aged 10 years and over and have called themselves unemployed is taken into account, the same 1.64 million figure for the unemployed for 1370 and a figure of 2 million for 1373 [year beginning 21 March 1994] create a big nationwide problem because they show that out of every eight employable people, one is unemployed.

The best way for employment without inflation is to guide the jobseekers toward productive jobs. Toward that end, agricultural, industrial, and production jobs must be considered in planning.

However, the main points affecting the attraction of the unemployed toward such jobs are the lack of future prospects, security, and the employment status. That is to say, a young unemployed person would prefer to work in one of the government establishments or those which are affiliated to the government. That is because he will be certain that besides having a permanent income, he will enjoy esteem and prestige and his pension and future will be assured. Therefore, if the government were able to plan in such a way that such a situation is created in the agricultural, industrial, and production sectors, then jobseekers will be more attracted to them and as a result of their productive employment, total product will be increased and prices will fall. This type of employment will bring inflation down, that is, it will increase purchasing power indirectly and wage deficiency cannot be felt.

For this purpose, it is better for numerous insurance organizations to be created in the community and the monopoly over the insurance market by one or two organizations be prevented. A case in point is the Social Security Organization, which until recently used to offer all types of services in which it had invested quite wisely. Recently, however, the organization has faced problems in the area of provision of its services and has therefore been forced to cut down some of them.

If more was done toward setting up social security organizations, there would then be some hope that the workforce would become more inclined toward productive jobs. This is not the case at present. We therefore see that any adopted method for moving toward employment in productive jobs eventually veers toward unproductive employment.

Individuals seeking to buy and sell factories and workshops, and not the country's production sector, are the main beneficiaries of loans payable according to Article Three [as published], agreements in principle, and other similar measures. That is to say that, for example, agreements in principle are applied for and obtained with the aim of subsequently selling them at higher prices. In other words, the aim is not to establish a factory or workshop.

If you ask anyone seeking to open a factory or a workshop about their motives for doing so, they will openly reply: I am trying to use the facilities provided by the government. After some negligible work, I intend to sell what I have obtained the moment I find a customer!

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Nepal & Bhutan

Nepal: Finance Minister Reports Economy 'Better Than Expectations'

BK2906114896 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 28 Jun 96

[Report by THE KATHMANDU POST reporter — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] KATHMANDU, June 27 - Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat addressing economists, professors, sociologists and experts about the upcoming budget claimed today that economic indicators are better than expectations.

According to Dr Mahat, the growth rate would increase by 6.1 percent, export by 8 percent, and investment significantly. "The inflation is 8 percent and money supply is under control," Mahat said.

Mahat further added that the ratio of budget deficit and international borrowing in GDP will remain more or less equal to that of last year. "However, for last few years the expenditure is growing, which has created a challenge for the government to balance the income and expenditure," he said.

The new budget is to concentrate on increasing growth, which is very important for the investment in social and rural sector, Mahat said. He said that the budget would be emphasising on income generating programmes to tackle the unemployment problem. "We will be initiating programmes to create human resources." [passage omitted]

Nepal: National Assembly, House of Representatives Open Session

BK2706112596 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 27 Jun 96

[Report by THE KATHMANDU POST reporter — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KATHMANDU, June 26 - The tenth session of both the National Assembly and the House of Representatives started here Wednesday. [3 July]

The upper house of parliament started under the chairmanship of the assembly chairman Beni Bahadur Karki.

Welcoming the members to the parliament session, Chairman Karki sought the cooperation of the parliamentarians during the session for consolidation of the multiparty democracy and overall development of the country.

He stressed the need for strengthening democracy by protecting the parliamentary democratic system, the government and traditions.

He said he had full faith the members of the assembly will show their cooperation in the proceeding of this session.

Similarly, the session of lower house of parliament was chaired by Speaker Ram Chandra Poudyal. Speaking on the occasion he said new experience and lessons have been gained in the multi-party parliamentary system and this valued experiences needs to be put into practice.

Speaking at the National Assembly, MP Subash Chand Newang said the Acts concerning the voters list need to be reviewed. Voter who have reached their voting age have not been able to exercise their right to vote due to the faults in the Act, he said.

People trying to register their names at the local offices have been returned due some irresponsible activities by some officials, he said. At present only the voters with a permanent address are eligible to get their name registered and the people with no permanent address have been denied their right to vote.

At this session, governmental policies and budget of next fiscal year is scheduled to be discussed. The session will also finalise the parliamentary bills to be introduced from the governmental and non-governmental levels.

Among the bills are 11 governmental bills, which is already distributed to the MPs and three bills related to socials issues.

Members of the Nepal Communist Party (UML) voiced their concern on the voters list and the act relating to the issue.

The sessions on both the houses started at 2 p.m. Wednesday and a minute of silence was observed to express their condolences on the sad demise of MP Dhanapati Upadhaya.

The second sitting of both the houses are scheduled to be held at 11 a.m. on Thursday. [4 July]

Nepal: Nepali Congress Concludes Agenda for Budget Meeting

BK2706023696 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 26 Jun 96

[Report by THE KATHMANDU POST reporter — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KATHMANDU, June 25 - The Nepali Congress [NC] parliamentary party today

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finalised the agenda of the party for the budget session of the parliament beginning Wednesday. [3 July]

The parliamentary party also unanimously called on the government to take firm action against those found guilty in the letters of credit (LC) scam, to which the prime minister and leader of the NC parliamentary party, Sher Bahadur Deuba, expressed his "support and commitment."

Concurring with Monday's [1 July] decisions of the work management committee of the parliamentary party, the meeting decided to raise problems of citizenship distribution, parliamentary ratification of the Mahakali Treaty and women's property rights as major political issues in the session.

"The meeting decided to continue in line with the path set by the last year's programmes, policies and budget while agreeing to include some new important programmes," NC chief whip Anand P Dhungana told the press after the meeting.

While a few members of the parliamentary party raised questions about the recent promotion of a few RPP [Rashtriya Prajatantra Party] ministers, the meeting generally agreed that political stability should be maintained in the country and that the government should complete its full term.

Some members also expressed apprehensions regarding the viability and usefulness of the Mahakali Treaty to Nepal. The concerns were cleared by the prime minister who said the treaty was not harmful to the country.

In his address to the meeting, NC president and former prime minister, Girija Prasad Koirala called on the members to unitedly assist and cooperate with the coalition government.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Bhutto Assures German Team of Help in Hostage Release

BK0407153296 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has assured that Pakistan will continue to lend all assistance for the release of the German hostage. In a message to the visiting German parliamentarian delegation and brother of the German hostage held by an unknown group in Indian occupied Kashmir, the prime minister said we will continue to do all that we can to get the hostages released unharmed.

A Foreign Office spokesman while briefing the press in Islamabad today quoting the prime minister's message said that no single incident has harmed the freedom struggle in Kashmir more than this abduction of four innocent Western tourists. The prime minister assured the delegation that Pakistan's cooperation in this regard will remain unflinching.

Pakistan: India Accused of 'Engineering' Hostage Taking in Kashmir

BK0807113596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 8 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The interior minister, Retired Major General Nasirullah Khan Babar, has stated unequivocally that Indian intelligence agencies have engineered kidnapping of foreign tourists in occupied Kashmir through so-called Al-Faran to cause damage to the ongoing liberation movement there. He was speaking in Senate today on a proposal by the leader of the opposition, Raja Mohammad Zaffarul Haq, about adopting a joint resolution on the issue in the upper house. The interior minister declared that Pakistan has no connection with so-called Al-Faran.

The minister of state for law and justice, Mian Raza Rabbani, said the two sides of the house irrespective of their political differences are unanimous on the question of Kashmir. The Senate, he said, has already adopted consensus resolution on the Kashmir problem and the government side is ready to sit with the opposition to work out a joint text on the question of foreign hostages in occupied Kashmir.

The chair directed the two sides to finalize a resolution on the issue.

Pakistan: Prime Minister Receives Wives of Kashmir Western Hostages

BK0707153996 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Wives of two western nationals taken hostage by a group called Al-Faran in occupied Kashmir last year called on Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in Islamabad today. The prime minister expressed her concern to them at this inhumane act and said this action has hurt the cause of Kashmiris. The prime minister added that we condemn acts of hostage taking anywhere in the world. She assured the wives of the hostages that Pakistan will continue its efforts to alleviate the suffering of the families of the hostages. She offered all amenities to them during their stay in Pakistan.

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Pakistan: Foreign Minister Comments on Delhi Refusal To Sign CTBT

BK0607111796 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 5 Jul 96 pp 1, 9

[Report by Correspondent]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali has said India perceives the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) as a major obstacle to the pursuit of its nuclear ambitions.

In an interview with The News Thursday, [4 July] the foreign minister said: "It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that the Indian announcement (regarding its refusal to accept the CTBT) has thrown a spanner in the works of CTBT."

The foreign minister said, Pakistan believes that the CTBT should be both comprehensive and universal. "The CTBT will bring no dividends to South Asia if India is not on board. It is imperative that the international community urge India to reconsider its position and thus avert danger of nuclear proliferation in South Asia."

He said Pakistan regards the CTBT as both a nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation measure.

"It is important that the CTBT provide clearly for halting the qualitative development of nuclear weapons."

The foreign minister said Pakistan supports the setting up of an effective, equitable and non-discriminatory international mechanism. "We, however, remain concerned that the use of National Technical Means (NTM) for triggering On Site Inspections (OSI) would render the treaty more unequal against the technologically less-advanced countries and open to discrimination and abuse by few states which possess such NTMs."

Following is the text of the interview.

Question: India has announced that it will neither accept the CTBT nor participate in the International Monitoring Regime. If India maintains this position, will Pakistan sign the CTBT?

Answer: We regret India's opting out of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty even before completion of negotiations by the Conference on Disarmament. Evidently, India perceives the CTBT as a major obstacle to the pursuit of its nuclear ambitions. It has deliberately broken ranks with the non-aligned states, which were endeavouring for successful completion of CTBT.

Instead of opting out, India should have worked with other non-aligned states for a treaty that is truly comprehensive, non-discriminatory and an effective step towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that the Indian announcement has thrown a spanner in the works of CTBT. Indian posturing is decidedly a negative and an unhelpful position. Global and regional non-proliferation have, perhaps, been dealt a deathblow by aggressive Indian posturing on CTBT.

Pakistan believes that the test ban treaty should be both comprehensive and universal. The CTBT will bring no dividends to South Asia if India is not brought on board. It is imperative that the international community urge India to reconsider its position to avert danger of nuclear proliferation in South Asia. It should be understood that in the view of most proponents of the CTBT this threat would be rendered virtually meaningless if its universality were to be eroded by the non-participation of a state like India.

India should review its position on the CTBT and join efforts for promoting security and stability in South Asia and beyond. I urge the new leadership of India to re-examine their faulted policy. I urge men of peace in India to stop its leaders from taking this fateful step.

Question: What is Pakistan's evaluation of the negotiations on the CTBT?

Answer: The CTBT negotiations have reached a critical phase. There are several important issues on which agreement has not yet been reached. These relate to the scope, monitoring and compliance mechanism, as well as provisions relating to entry into force of the treaty.

The text of the treaty would ban "nuclear explosion" tests but not "all" nuclear tests. This distinction enables certain states possessing nuclear weapons to conduct sub critical tests which could be used not only for ensuring "safety and reliability" of their existing nuclear arsenals but also for their qualitative improvement. In the name of "safety and reliability" an attempt is being made to create a permanent nuclear apartheid.

The entry into force provision of the treaty have yet to be settled. We believe that for the treaty to be effective and comprehensive all states which have the technical capability to conduct nuclear tests — five nuclear powers and the three so-called threshold states — must accede to it. The ratification of the treaty by these states is essential and an indispensable condition for ensuring that its objectives are realised.

I would like to reiterate that a ban on nuclear explosions is better than no ban at all. It would prevent the development of a number of new nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons systems. It would also contribute significantly to nuclear non-proliferation. For Pakistan halting the further proliferation of nuclear weapons capabilities in South Asia is an important objective. A

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Test Ban Treaty accepted by both Pakistan and India will fulfil the objective of the bilateral test ban treaty which we had formally proposed to India in June 1987.

Question: The deadline of June 20 for the conclusion of the treaty has not been met. Do you think that the treaty could be finalised before the next UN General Assembly session?

Answer: We hope that the treaty could be finalised before the next UN General Assembly session. However, it is important that the text is acceptable to all countries and reached through genuine and constructive negotiations in a spirit of compromise and understanding. India's announcement of June 20, denouncing the CTBT, is of course a major setback in achieving a truly comprehensive and universal treaty. It could jeopardise the negotiations and, perhaps, defeat its very objective unless the world community urges India to change its unreasonable approach to this sensitive matter.

Pakistan: Leghari, Bhutto Congratulate Russia's Yeltsin on Reelection

BK0607092896 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto have congratulated President Boris Yeltsin on his reelection as Russian president. In his message, Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari said he hoped the friendly relations between the two countries would not only benefit the two people, but would help maintain peace and stability in the South Asian and Central Asian region.

In her message, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said Yeltsin's reelection is the manifestation of the trust of Russian people in his leadership. The prime minister said Pakistan and Russia share common perceptions on a number of regional and international issues. The prime minister said she hoped the increase of Pakistan-Russian cooperation would help regional peace and security.

The president and prime minister also expressed their best wishes for the health and happiness of Boris Yeltsin.

Pakistan: Afghan 'Spy' Arrested With Drawings of Stinger Missiles

BK0507101696 Rawalpindi JANG in Urdu 4 Jul 96 pp 1,3

[Report by JANG correspondent in Peshawar; all names as transliterated]

[FBIS Translated Text] Political authorities have arrested an Afghan spy in the Torkham area. Drawings of stinger missiles and various important secret documents have been recovered from his possession. The authorities also arrested a Sudanese, a Chinese, and a Sikh. Meanwhile, a team from the Khyber Rifles recovered Russian and Chinese-made weapons from a terrorist, thus foiling an attempt to launch a terrorist attack in Rawalpindi.

Syed Mujibur Rehman, the assistant political agent of the Landi Kotal area, reportedly received information from secret sources that said Syed Mehm'ud Shah, son of Syed Abrar Shah, a prominent leader of Ahmad Shah Mas'ud Group, would be entering Pakistan with some very important secret documents. Upon receiving this report, the Khyber Khasadar Force increased its vigilance along the Pak-Afghan border near Torkham. Afghan national Syed Mehm'ud Shah was arrested while trying to enter Pakistan. He was caught with important documents and drawings of stinger missiles. Syed Mehm'ud Shah's brother, Syed Muzaffar Shah, has also been blacklisted by the Government of Pakistan due to his involvement in terrorist activities and espionage.

A letter from the former federal minister for interior has also been recovered from Syed Mehm'ud Shah. The letter was addressed to a high official of police and says that Mehm'ud Shah works for him, and should be given special treatment. The political authorities have also arrested one Sudanese — Abdul Ahmad, one Chinese — Tae Par Kan, one Sikh — Narain Singh and ten suspected Afghans — Gol Said, Najibullah, Noor Mohammad, Gol Agha, Mir Wais, Zalmay, Babrak, Rehmatullah, and Ahmed Khan. The political authorities of tribal areas have instructed the armed troops of Khyber Khasadar force to remain on red alert and keep strict vigilance on the Torkham border.

Pakistan: Foreign Minister on Indian Talks; U.S. Defense Equipment

BK0707084596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0500 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, has said due to effective foreign policy of the Pakistan Government, India has expressed the willingness to resolve the Kashmir dispute through talks. Addressing a public rally in Kasur last evening, he said Pakistan desires congenial relations with India and want peace based on equality and justice; however, he added, Pakistan could not be cowed down by threats of missiles. The foreign minister said Pakistan will respond to Prithvi and Agni missiles appropriately. It is in the Indian interest to avoid confrontation and have talks to resolve differences.

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Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali said Pakistan would not sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty unilaterally and will continue to safeguard the country's nuclear policy. He said the country had adequate arrangements to safeguard the geographical frontiers.

Referring to the defense equipment deal with the United States, the foreign minister said Pakistan will soon be getting the equipment, besides the amount of $120 million. He said we will get back each and every penny paid for the F-16 aircraft. He said we have not only strengthened our foreign policy, but have also not rolled back the nuclear program.

Criticizing the previous government, he said Mr. Nawaz Sharif has turned Karachi into hell and looted the national exchequer. The foreign minister said it is due to the wrong policies of the previous government that the people are suffering today. He said the PDF [Pakistan Democratic Front] government would continue to strengthen the economic development and progress of the country.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Foreign Minister Comments on Suicide Bomb Attack in Jaffna

BK0607112996 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 6 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar has said that Thursday's (4 July) bomb attack in the Jaffna town would not have any effect on the government's rehabilitation program in the Northern peninsula and in particular obtaining foreign assistance for rehabilitation work. Addressing newsmen in Colombo yesterday, Minister Kadirgamar said that the incident clearly indicated that the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] did not care for the ordinary civilians.

Minister Nimal S. de Silva, who narrowly escaped the suicide bomb explosion, said that the attack in Jaffna proves that the LTTE was opposed to peace. The minister pointed out that the terrorists would do anything to undermine development. He observed that his visit to the North had given him a clear understanding of the basic needs of the Jaffna civilians. Building materials are in great demand and are also very expensive. It was for this reason that the government decided to open up a branch of the Building Materials Corporation in Jaffna. The minister said that the LTTE attack was clearly aimed at preventing the government from meeting the needs of the civilians there. He (?said) that the terrorists would not be permitted to disrupt the efforts to restore normalcy.

The operational headquarters of the Defense Ministry in a news release issued yesterday said that the bomb explosion in Jaffna has led to the death of 23 people. Over 60 were wounded. They included school children. The operational headquarters says this figure goes to show the callous disregard the LTTE leader, Prabhakaran, has for his own people of whom he claims to be the savior. The LTTE had targeted a minister and senior Army officers who had become popular among the civilians there within a very short period for their dedication to restore normalcy. Intelligence reports say the LTTE would also have attempted to create a backlash in the South [words indistinct] retaliation by the government troops in Jaffna. The troops, in spite if many recent provocative attacks, have held their power foiling the terrorist tactics.

Sri Lanka: Targeted Minister Details Suicide Bomb Attack

BK0707124596 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 6 Jul 96

[Report by Sarath Maialasekera — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government of President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga can never be deterred in its efforts to develop the North to give a square deal to the people there for all what they have suffered at the brutal hands of the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam], said Housing, Construction and Public Utilities Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva on Friday [5 July].

Speaking to the media at a news conference in the hospital ward, the Minister who survived Thursday's [4 July] suicide bomb attack in Jaffna, said: "This experience has only steeled me to face more challenges. It has strengthened my will and courage to serve the people of Jaffna who have suffered long at the hands of the despotic and brutal Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam."

Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar who was visiting his injured colleague was also present.

The Minister who appeared cheerful despite the painful injuries and the trauma he underwent, charged that LTTE by its inhuman action had tried to disorganise the development, rehabilitation and reconstruction effort now on in Jaffna. "The LTTE, it appears, does not want the people in Jaffna to live in peace and prosperity," he added.

The Minister recalled that he was given a rousing welcome by the people when he arrived at Stanley Road, Jaffna for the opening of the Building Materials Corporation branch.

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He said that he earlier visited the Naga Vihara where the bhikkhus [Bhuddists monks] chanted seth pirith [prayers] to bless him.

"A buying spree by an enthusiastic crowd followed the opening of the BMC branch. There was such brisk business, the turn over within an hour or so amounted to a record Rs.[rupees] 3 million," he recalled.

After the opening, the Minister proceeded to the waiting jeep.

"About 300 people who had assembled cheered me and I acknowledged their cheers waving my hand. Brigadier Hamangoda who was posthumously promoted as Major General and who provided security from the start of the visit was in the driving seat and I was already seated on the left side. My long standing security officer Banda was in the rear seat. Then suddenly I heard the explosion and saw Major General Hamangoda's head slumped and he was profusely bleeding from a neck injury."

After the blast the Minister said that he heard several shots being fired at the jeep. Immediately after the explosion army personnel came and removed him away from the scene to the Palaly hospital.

Minister said that he received several injuries on his right side of his face. "It is not that serious but the doctors who examined me said that they have to obtain a second opinion about a pellet that is embedded on my ear."

Although he received a number of telephone calls requesting him to come back to Colombo as early as possible, he had to wait to accompany the other injured persons. "I did not want to come back to Colombo leaving others behind".

The Minister said that the people in Jaffna urgently needed food and building materials. The Government had made all arrangements to purchase cement from India. That shipment will come direct to Jaffna, the minister added.

Minister de Silva answering a question by the media said that this blast would not impede the government's efforts to reconstruct and rehabilitate the peninsula which would cost a massive 240 million US dollars.

Former Health Minister Renuka Herath was also one of several visitors at the hospital.

Sri Lanka: Troops Arrest 10 as Tigers Warn of More Suicide Bombings

BK0707124896 Hong Kong AFP in English 1204 GMT 7 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] COLOMBO, June 7 (AFP) — Security forces arrested 10 Tamils in northern Sri Lanka after a suicide bombing that killed 37 people as Tamil Tiger rebels, Sunday [7 Jul], strongly hinted of more such attacks, officials and Tamil sources said.

Government troops rounded up those suspected of being linked to the woman who staged Thursday's [4 July] devastating attack aimed at Housing Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva who narrowly escaped with head injuries, officials said.

They said the bomber who strapped explosives around her stomach to give the impression that she was pregnant could be identified because her head remained intact and had been brought here for forensic tests.

The Tigers carried out a drive-in bombing and devastated the Central Bank here on January 31, killing 91 and wounding 1,400. Since then police have issued alerts for some 30 possible suicide bombers who had infiltrated here.

The latest attack in Jaffna, the former citadel of the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), was the first assassination bid against a politician since troops captured the region after operations begun in October.

"There is a lot of co-operation from the public and we are getting more and more information about the suicide bomber," a defence official here said. Among those killed and wounded in the blast were a large number of Tamil civilians.

Even as troops Sunday remained on maximum alert for more suicide bombings, the LTTE in a statement said human bombs were deployed when their protracted separatist campaign faced obstacles.

The LTTE in a statement issued from its London office to mark the ninth anniversary of the first suicide bombing against security forces said Tamil civilians in areas still under their control commemorate the event Friday. [5 Jul]

The Tigers quoted a woman Tiger leader named Chandrika as saying that the Sri Lankan government was trying to smash the "fast rising Tamil Eelam state by a strategy of dividing the Tamil people and the LTTE."

"Praising the Black Tigers, she said that it was the Black Tigers who took our struggle on the path of victory when ever we faced difficulties in our long march to freedom," the statement quoted Chandrika as saying on Friday.

The clandestine radio of the LTTE, the Voice of Tigers, said Tiger supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran hailed his band of suicide bombers as their deadliest weapon against government forces, Tamil sources monitoring the radio said.

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Prabhakaran, in a statement to mark the first Tiger suicide bombing on July 5 1987, said the elite bombers were their protective armour.

Suicide bombers have carried out more than a dozen attacks and being blamed for killing nearly 200 people, including Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa and former Indian premier Rajiv Gandhi.

"Black Tigers are the self protective armour of our race. They are the men of flame who can destroy the enemy's armed strength by their brain strength," Prabhakaran said over the clandestine Voice of Tigers radio Friday.

The Voice of Tigers said the suicide bomber "riding a motorcycle" successfully carried out the attack against the housing minister but did not directly claim responsibility for Thursday's bombing.

The top military commander of Jaffna, Brigadier Ananda Hamangoda, who was killed in Thursday's blast was cremated with full military honours at a public park in northwestern Sri Lanka Sunday.

Officials said that the Tigers were likely to use more suicide bombers because they did not have the ability to stage large scale hit-and-run attacks within the Jaffna peninsula which was once their main bastion.

Black Tigers have supper with Tiger supremo Prabhakaran and pose for photographs the night before carrying out their final Kamikaze-style missions.

The commitment of Tiger fighters to their violent campaign for an independent homeland in the northeast has earned them the grudging admiration of even their bitter foes, the Sri Lankan security forces.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Dispatch Reports Suicide Bomb Attack in Jaffna

BK0807112396 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A suicide bomb attack took place at Stanley Road in Jaffna this afternoon. A woman, riding a motorcycle strapped with powerful bombs, is reported to have carried out this attack. This attack was reportedly carried out to target the minister who was proceeding in his vehicle along Stanley Road after inaugurating the Building Materials Corporation. Reports say that 21 people were killed and 55 others injured in this attack. Brigadier Anand Homangoda, the officer in charge of Velikamam area; R. Gunawardene, Chairman, Cement Corporation; a senior official of the Building Materials Corporation; and some military officers were also killed in the attack. International news agencies report that when the minister for housing and construction, Nimal Siripala de Silva, was driving with his bodyguards and officials, the woman on a motorcycle with bombs collided with the minister's car and caused the blast. International news agencies also say that the minister escaped with minor injuries, while 21 people, including the minister's bodyguards, were reportedly killed. There is no authentic report to substantiate this.

This major bomb blast took place within 10 days of Chandrika Bandaranaike's announcement that peace is returning to Jaffna peninsula and that Jaffna would become a peaceful city. It is to be noted that Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga issued an appeal to the countries of the world, seeking aid in the amount of $280 million to rebuild Jaffna. [passage omitted].

Sri Lankan Air Force planes conducted bombing raids on Pooneryn locality yesterday. The Kfir planes that encircled the Pooneryn military camp carried out bombing raids on the areas surrounding the camp.

Sea Tigers Major Pork alias Marisalin Suresh Kumar [name as transliterated] from Vavuniya, Major Kulendran alias Veerakathippillai Baskaran from Jaffna, and Captain Sumitran alias Murugaiah Karthikairasa from Kilinochchi attained martyrdom in a confrontation on the high seas yesterday. Second Lieutenant Jayamathi alias Natarasa Ketheeswari of Jaffna was martyred in an accidental bomb blast that took place the day before yesterday. Our tribute goes to those national heroes who sacrificed their lives for the sake of the liberation of our motherland.

Thanks. The Tigers' aspirations: motherland of Tamil Eelam!

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